

THE
Manchester
Quarterly



AN ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL
OF
LITERATURE AND ART.

Contents:

	PAGE
I.—Thomas de Quincey; from a Bust by JOHN CASSIDY Frontispiece	
II.—The Tendencies and Prospects of the Modern Drama. By GEORGE MILNER	201
III.—Milton's Latin Poems. By WILLIAM WHITEHEAD...	208
IV.—Charles Lamb as Poet. By JOHN MORTIMER.....	218
V.—Bereaved: Verses. By W. R. CREDLAND	230
VI.—Literary Lumber. By ARTHUR W. FOX	231
VII.—Brantôme. By EDMUND MERCER.....	252
VIII.—Piers Plowman. By WALTER BUTTERWORTH	278
IX.—Wandering Willie: a Child's Song. By TINSLEY PRATT	295

INVALUABLE BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

CHAMBERS'S ENCYCLOPÆDIA.

Revised to 1901.

Complete in Ten Vols., Imperial 8vo., cloth, £5; half mor., £7. 10s.

Contains THIRTY THOUSAND ARTICLES contributed by Specialists such as W. E. Gladstone, R. D. Blackmore, Andrew Lang, W. E. Henley, Canon Ainger, Thomas A. Edison, A. R. Wallace, Dean Farrar, and a host of writers of equal eminence.

Pall Mall Gazette, 8th March, 1898, says—"In many ways the 'Britannica' is a work rather for the specialist than the ordinary man, whose wants are far better supplied by the brief but far more comprehensive notes of 'Chambers's.'"

NOW READY. Volumes I. and II. Price 10s. 6d. each net. To be completed in Three Volumes.

NEW EDITION OF CHAMBERS'S CYCLOPÆDIA OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

Edited by DAVID PATRICK, LL.D.

A History Critical and Biographical of Authors in the English Tongue from the earliest times till the present day, with specimens of their writings.

Contains contributions by Rev. Stopford Brooke, Professor P. Hume Brown, A. H. Bullen, Austin Dobson, Dr. Samuel R. Gardiner, Edmund Gosse, F. Hinds Groome, Andrew Lang, Sidney Lee, A. W. Pollard, Professor Saintsbury, and others.

Chambers's Biographical Dictionary.

One Volume, Crown 8vo., Cloth, 10s. 6d.; Half-morocco, 15s.

Dealing with many thousand Celebrities of all Nations from the remotest times to the present day; with copious Bibliographies and Pronunciations of the more difficult Names.

CHAMBERS'S ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

A New Large-type Dictionary of the English Language.

Complete in One Vol., Imperial 8vo., 1264 pages. Cloth, 12s. 6d.; Half-mor., 18s.
Edited by Rev. Thomas Davidson.

"... A workmanlike and well-appointed volume. . . . A valuable and useful dictionary that would enrich any library."—*Scotsman*.

CHAMBERS'S CONCISE GAZETTEER OF THE WORLD.

Topographical, Statistical, Historical, Pronouncing.

Crown 8vo., Cloth, 768 pages. Price 6s. With 32 Maps (forming an excellent Atlas), Cloth, 8s.; Half-morocco, 12s.

"A very useful volume, which contains a really prodigious amount of information about many thousands of places."—*Times*.

All the above books are to be seen at Messrs. SHERRATT & HUGHES, Booksellers, St. Ann Street, Manchester, and with the exception of net books are supplied at 25% discount for cash.

Messrs. SHERRATT & HUGHES

BEG TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE FOLLOWING

PUBLICATIONS

BY MEMBERS OF THE MANCHESTER LITERARY CLUB

ARE FOR SALE AT THEIR ESTABLISHMENT

27, St. Ann Street, Manchester.

AUTHOR.	TITLE.	DATE.	PRICE.
WILLIAM E. A. AXON	The Ancoats Skylark	1894	1s.
" "	Life of William Lloyd Garrison ...	1890	1s. 6d.
W. V. BURGESS ...	Hand in Hand with Dame Nature ...	1900	3s. 6d.
" "	One Hundred Sonnets—With Intro- ductory Essay	1901	2s.
W. R. CREDLAND ...	The Manchester Public Free Libraries	1899	3s.
ERNEST FLETCHER (Edited by)	The Conversations of James Northcote, R.A., with James Ward, on Art and Artistes (containing twenty Illustrations)	1901	10s. 6d.
ARTHUR W. FOX ...	A Book of Bachelors	1899	10s.
ABEL HEYWOOD ...	Norwegian Fairy Tales, translated from the Collection of P. Chr. Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe. Illustrated by Bessie Du Val ...	1895	5s.
GEORGE MILNER ...	Country Pleasures (4th Edition) ...	1900	3s. 6d.
" "	Studies of Nature on the Coast of Arran. Illustrated by W. Noel Johnson	1894	4s. 6d.
" "	From Dawn to Dark: A Book of Verses	1896	5s.
" "	A Glossary of the Lancashire Dialect, by G. Milner & J. H. Nodal. (2 Vols.)
" "	Bennett Street Memorials: A Record of Sunday School Work	1880	3s. 6d.
" "	Gleanings from a Manuscript Magazine (3 vols.)	1875 to 1890	1s. 6d. each

Messrs. SHERRATT & HUGHES

BEG TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE FOLLOWING

PUBLICATIONS

BY MEMBERS OF THE MANCHESTER LITERARY CLUB

ARE FOR SALE AT THEIR ESTABLISHMENT

27, St. Ann Street, Manchester.

AUTHOR.	TITLE.	DATE.	PRICE.
GEORGE MILNER ...	The Works of Edwin Waugh. (3 Vols.) Edited by, with Prefaces and Intro- ductions, Biographical and Critical	1892	3/6 each
THOMAS NEWBIGGING	Essays at Eventide	1898	3s. 6d.
" "	Lancashire Humour	1900	2s. 6d.
" "	Do. (Second Edition). Illustrated ...	1901	2s. 6d.
" "	Lancashire Characters and Places ...	1891	...
" "	The Scottish Jacobites: Their Songs, Music, and Battles. Illustrated.	1899	3s. 6d.
CHARLES NICKSON	Belfast and North of Ireland ...	1896	1s.
" "	History of Runcorn. Illustrated by Hedley Fitton	1887	10s. 6d.
JUDGE PARRY and HENRY WATSON, Mus. Doc.	Butter-Scotia Ballads	1900	...
REV. G. A. PAYNE	Mrs. Gaskell and Knutsford	1900	3s.
J. PHYTHIAN ...	Story of Art in the British Isles ...	1901	1s.
TINSLEY PRATT ...	Persephone in Hades	1899	3s. 6d.
" " ...	Wordsworth and Rydaland other Poems	1899	...
ROWLAND THIRL- MERE (John Walker)	A Woman of Emotions. (Allen) ...	1901	5s.
" "	Idylls of Spain. (Mathews)... ..	1897	4s. 6d.



Contents:

	PAGE
I.—Thomas de Quincey; from a Bust by JOHN CASSIDY	Frontispiece
II.—The Tendencies and Prospects of the Modern Drama. By GEORGE MILNER	201
III.—Milton's Latin Poems. By WILLIAM WHITE-HEAD	208
IV.—Charles Lamb as Poet. By JOHN MORTIMER	218
V.—Bereaved: Verses. By W. R. CREDLAND ...	230
VI.—Literary Lumber. By ARTHUR W. FOX ...	231
VII.—Brantôme. By EDMUND MERCER	252
VIII.—Piers Plowman. By WALTER BUTTERWORTH	278
IX.—Wandering Willie: a Child's Song. By TINSLEY PRATT	295



Manchester Quarterly Advertiser.

JULY, 1903.

NOTICE.— Communications intended for the Editor may be addressed to Mr. CREDLAND, 185, Great Cheetham Street, Higher Broughton.
Business letters, orders, &c., should be sent to the publishers, MESSRS. SHERRATT AND HUGHES, 27, St. Ann Street, Manchester.

Manchester Literary Club.

FOUNDED 1862.

The objects of the MANCHESTER LITERARY CLUB are:—

1. To encourage the pursuit of Literature and Art; to promote research in the several departments of intellectual work; and to further the interests of Authors and Artists in Lancashire.
2. To publish from time to time works illustrating or elucidating the literature, art, and history of the county.
3. To provide a place of meeting where persons interested in the furtherance of these objects can associate together.

The methods by which these objects are sought to be obtained are:—

1. The holding of weekly meetings, from October to April, for social intercourse, and for the hearing and discussion of papers.
2. The publication of such papers, at length or abridged, in a Magazine, entitled the *Manchester Quarterly*, as well as in an annual volume of Transactions; and of other work undertaken at the instance of the Club, including a projected series of volumes dealing with local literature.
3. The formation of a library consisting of, (a) works by members, (b) books by local writers or relating to the locality, and (c) general works of reference.
4. The exhibition, as occasion offers, of pictures by artist members of the Club.

Membership of the Club is limited to authors, journalists, men of letters, painters, sculptors, architects, engravers, musical composers, members of the learned professions, and of English and foreign universities, librarians, and generally persons engaged or specially interested in literary or artistic pursuits.

The meetings are held at the Grand Hotel, Aytoun Street, every Monday evening during the Session. Each Session opens and closes with a *Conversazione*. There are also occasional Musical and Dramatic Evenings, and a Christmas Supper. During the vacation excursions are held, of which due notice is given.

W. R. CREDLAND, *Hon. Secretary*,

185, Great Cheetham Street, Higher Broughton.



THOMAS DE QUINCEY

From a Bust by John Cassidy.



THE TENDENCIES AND PROSPECTS OF THE MODERN DRAMA.*

By GEORGE MILNER.

IT is no easy matter to deal with the subject of this address. When you confront it, and, so to speak, sit down before it, the difficulties increase rather than diminish. There are so many cross-currents, so many tendencies which seem to run in different directions, that hopefulness and despair may invade the mind at the same moment. An attempt, however, may be made to reach some firm ground.

The course of the drama has been in all countries practically the same. First there is the rude chant of heroic deeds, or the episodes of love, mixed with primitive dance and song; then the introduction of the mythological or religious element; and, gradually, the Mysteries and Miracle plays are evolved. These were so attractive, and answered so obviously to a demand—nay more, appealed so strongly to an inborn instinct in the mind, that the path which led to the developed drama lay broad and open before those who had the creative faculty in any degree. The development moved contemporaneously on various lines. Puerilities, grotesque elements, things that were not purely dramatic, were dropped; character was more clearly

* Notes of an Address (being one of a series) given at a meeting of the Manchester Literary Club devoted to the consideration of *The Modern Drama*.

thought out, action was concentrated, and interest intensified; and above all poetic quality and literary skill were immensely increased. In all countries, ancient or modern, the line of advance was almost identical, and in all, there have been periods of culmination and of subsequent decay.

In England, as we know, the high-water mark was reached in the 17th century. The subsequent deterioration was gradual; and from time to time there were signs of revival, and even of considerable achievement, but we have never recovered the glory of our former estate. For this decline there are many reasons. It may be said there is one reason, and that will suffice—that you have had no Shakespearean dramas because you have had no Shakespeare to write them. But this is begging the question. Other reasons may be given.

First: The unexampled greatness of the Elizabethans has overshadowed later men, and instead of acting as an incentive, has been a discouraging, and even a paralysing influence. Second: There is the immense vogue of the novel. Writers of great ability have, no doubt, devoted themselves to the novel who otherwise might have succeeded in the drama. But also they might not. It is no easy thing to write a good novel—unfortunately it is only too easy to write a bad one—but still the demand on the intellect is not so great, nor the conditions so exacting as in the case of the drama, and the failure is more complete and disastrous. Third: The production of the drama in its higher forms has been discouraged by the habit, which for so long prevailed, of translating and adapting from the French. This injured us in two ways. It gave us a flood of unworthy subjects, and revealed the impotence of our own invention. A further reason will be found in the taste which has arisen among the people, and which has been fostered by

managers, for plays of the most brainless and frivolous kind, helped off by the meretricious tricks of the Music Hall; and of another class which, usurping the name of realistic, profess to give a picture of contemporary life, especially that of the so-called "upper classes." With regard to most of these plays we are tempted to suspect that one reason for their production is that the modern dramatist, when suggestions from the French repertory fail him, finds the abundant and circumstantial reports of our Divorce Court proceedings only too handy for his purpose. In all these plays the sex-problem, as it is called, is thrust into an undesirable prominence—undesirable on artistic as well as on moral grounds. The symmetry and perspective which true art demands are outraged quite as much as decency. If a brief synopsis of a score of these productions was laid before us we should see how they all finger the same monotonous string, and what a deplorable poverty of invention they reveal. It is difficult to see how plays of this type can be of use to any human being, either as rational amusement, or as helping towards intellectual or moral elevation. We are all slow enough to "move upward" towards the higher plane of thought and action, and need least of all to have vice either set before us in alluring forms, or deprecated in a manner which is as hypocritical as the conventional homage which some men pay to virtue. It is often urged that all this is done out of regard for truth and sincerity. It might as well be contended that the stern search for truth demands that we should industriously analyse the contents of every casual cesspool, and lay open to the public nose the course of every vile sewer.

The question remains: If not these, what then? It is admitted that during the closing twenty years of the last century the supremacy of the novel has been somewhat

shaken, and that in all European countries there has been an attempt to revive the dramatic form as a vehicle of literary expression. It is worth noting that this revival has been accompanied by an extraordinary interchange of dramatic work among diverse speaking nations. The drama has become cosmopolitan and international. Mr. Brander Matthews has recently pointed out that "*Cyrano de Bergerac*" and "*The Doll's House*" have been performed in every quarter of the globe, and that "the playgoers of New York have been permitted to see an English play, '*Hamlet*,' acted by a French company; a German play, '*Magda*,' acted by an Italian company; and a Russian play, '*The Power of Darkness*,' acted by a German company." Can this return of activity be utilised for the improvement of the theatre and made the basis of a movement which shall give to the modern drama something of the potency and intellectual elevation which it enjoyed in England two hundred years ago? I think it can. Let us draw near home for proof and illustration. Three performances have recently been given in Manchester, each of which in different ways, and appealing to audiences differently composed, was successful to a remarkable degree—"Everyman," "*As You Like It*," and "*Henry the Eighth*." The old morality play, in spite of its grim realism and its forbidding subject, filled the vast Free Trade Hall again and again by its thoroughness and by the artistic perfection which was achieved within its narrow lines. It may be said that the same persons would not care to see it often. That is true, but those who saw it once were fascinated though they were awe-stricken, and the memory of it will never leave their minds. Of "*As You Like It*" it need only be said that it was an entirely beautiful and harmonious presentation of an ever-delightful play, and that for many weeks it

filled the theatre with intelligent and appreciative audiences. Mr. Flanagan's production of "Henry the Eighth" was also, like his many previous annual revivals during the pantomime season, a remarkable success. In 1726 Theobald said:—"We may prophesy that one Time or another the Rust of Pantomimes will be a Salve for the Recovery of Dramatic Poetry." Mr. Flanagan has found and used that salve, and Manchester cannot be too grateful to him for the courageous attack which he has made upon the tyranny of a theatrical tradition. It is not unimportant to observe—as bearing upon the question at issue—that at each of the performances just named, while the ordinary playgoer was well represented, the audiences were largely composed of persons who are not habitual frequenters of the theatre.

Encouraged by these experiments may we not cease to regard as Utopian the attempt to retain and widen the vogue of Shakespeare on the stage? Must it still be said that the familiar word spells "bankruptcy," and is no longer a name to conjure with? And, further, are there not many modern plays of high character which, if dealt with adequately and with enthusiasm, as Mr. Flanagan has dealt with "Henry the Eighth," would draw large and appreciative houses?

I will name but three writers as examples of what is meant—Tennyson, Browning and Stephen Phillips. I see no reason why "Becket," at any rate, of Tennyson's plays, should not still hold the stage if produced as Irving produced it. Perhaps the characters are more numerous than was necessary but the speeches are not, as might have been expected, too long, and the Tennysonian mannerism is seldom in evidence; the language, indeed, is generally clear and simple, and strong with what may be called the

strength of provincial speech. The plot touches a vital point in our English story and the scenes which deal with Rosamund and her child are full of delicate pathos. I do not remember how many nights the play ran in London but I know when it had reached the fiftieth performance it was still in the full flow of popularity. Mr. William Archer says that "Tennyson was not lacking in dramatic faculty, but he worked in an outworn form and had not strength to utilise it." With this I cannot agree. The Shakesperean form, unlike that of the classical drama, is so various that it can never be outworn, and Tennyson's work was not unworthy of his medium. Even Mr. Archer admits that "Becket" "met with a certain success," and that the great Archbishop was one of Irving's finest characters. In the dedication of the play to the Earl of Selborne, Tennyson says it was not "intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre." This, I think, indicates one of the reasons why so many modern plays have failed, either wholly or partially, when put upon the stage. Success will only be secured by writing directly for the theatre as Shakespeare did. If it be thought desirable to put plays into a more literary form for private reading, that should be done subsequently. A play may be *adapted* by a manager, as no doubt "Becket" was adapted, but the operation should be unnecessary. To popularise the plays of Browning before an audience of the present day would, no doubt, be a difficult task, but some experiments recently made by the Independent Theatre were by no means discouraging. Of Stephen Phillips we have great hope. Among all our younger men he gives the greatest promise of fine ideal work, lofty in conception and yet skilfully constructed—using, as Shakespeare did, his practical knowledge of the actor's business—for direct and immediate use on the actual

stage. Mr. Archer says that Phillips is "a rebel against the Shakesperean tradition." Here again I cannot follow the distinguished critic. Phillips has too much good sense to rebel against such an authority. Shakespeare has taught him much. But it is one thing to learn in the school of a great master and quite another thing to become his slavish imitator.

It may be convenient here to summarise the propositions which have been advanced or implied in this address.

First: That the existing modern drama is inadequate and unfit for its purpose.

Second: That the reform must begin with the audiences. They must be taught to appreciate and ask for that which is best. The manager will give the audiences what they want, and he, in turn, will demand from the dramatist what he needs.

Third: That there is good reason to suppose that the drama, in its higher and purer forms, would be acceptable if adequately presented, and I will add that I think in the immediate future success would be most likely to come with the Romantic Comedy rather than with other lower or higher forms.

Some people fear that in the future there will be less chance than ever for the poetical drama, that the "spread of democracy and the growth of the scientific spirit" are inimical to the success of the higher literature. Sir Leslie Stephen says: "There is something in the very nature of modern progress essentially antagonistic to poetry and romance." Again, I do not agree with the accredited authority. The more strenuous life becomes, the more surely will reaction follow, and the playgoer of the future will demand for his refreshment, his delight, and his refuge, all that can be given to him by poetry and romance in their loftiest manifestations.



MILTON'S LATIN POEMS.

By WILLIAM WHITEHEAD.

ALTHOUGH to attempt to classify men of genius is a dangerous process, in reading the poets, we are almost compelled to notice two great divisions, one of the children of nature, and the other the sons of experience. To the former, song seems a natural gift from heaven, they seem to have an inward compulsion to chant the music that is in them, and the melody produced is all their own, recalling no precedent. Of such were Homer, Shakespeare, Burns and Wordsworth. Not so is it with the poets of experience. Endowed with great powers in their youth, they know that only with the utmost culture and study will it be possible to utter in harmonious numbers and dignity of speech their great ideal, and accordingly set themselves to con the best that has been produced before them in order to equal or surpass it; and among these we may consider Virgil, Horace, Dante, Chaucer, Spencer, and pre-eminently Milton.

It does not follow, however, that the latter class are inferior to the former; indeed, very often they are far superior, but from necessity they are less original and constantly remind us of others; and Milton following the advice of Horace,

vos exemplaria Graeca
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.

imbued himself so much with the Hellenic spirit, that to the end he views nature through the anthropomorphical medium of the Greeks, describing her not as she is, but as she would have appeared to the mind of one convinced that her attributes were ruled by different deities having special functions. The perusal of his Latin verses, which as their titles tell us, were mostly written within his twentieth year, brings forcibly before us the inception of this classicism, and how it became a part of his spiritual existence. No man writing in a language not his own can be anything but an imitator. To an Englishman a great idea will not occur nor be developed through all the processes of the mind in either Latin, Italian, or any tongue but English. It is not strange, therefore, that Milton is no exception to the rule, but his great merit is that he has preserved the Roman train of thought, form, and diction, by imitation and not transcriptions. To illustrate our meaning: we constantly find lines which have such a familiar ring that we are persuaded we have heard them before, till on reference we find that though the sentiment may be almost identical, the diction is quite recast. Take a few instances:—

Milton. *Est locus aeterna septus caligine noctis.*

Ovid (*Meta I.*). *Est nemus Aemoniae, praerupta quod undique claudit Sylva.*

Milton. . . . *et quae Jovis ora decebant Grandia magniloquis elata vocabula Graiis.*

Horace (*de Arte P.*). *Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo Musa loqui.*

Milton. *Finibus occiduis circumfusus incolit aequor Gens exosa milu.*

Virgil (*Aeneids I.*) *Gens inimica mihi Tyrrhenum navigat equor.*

We must not expect, therefore, originality in Milton's

Latin verse, but the charm which we derive from a work of art beautifully imitated by a young apprentice glorying in the display of his own craftsmanship. Were it not so we should not have found him telling his father—

Victrices hederas inter laurosque sedebo;
and again when making a grand display for Mansus and his Italian friends repeat with evident gusto, and the change of one syllable, what he must have considered remarkably fine

“Victrices hederas inter laurosque sedebis.”

In all Milton's writing there is nothing so truly distinctive as his recourse to Greek tradition and nomenclature, the Greek gods take of course a prominent part, and so dear did they become to the poet that even in “*Paradise Lost*,” where the Assyrian and Egyptian are roughly handled under the guise of devils, the Greeks are gently, almost honourably mentioned. You would never find him, in describing a great height, comparing it to Snowdon on top of Ben Nevis, if Ossa on Pelion could be brought in. I wish to strongly emphasise this because if we are to give credence to anonymous works attributed to Milton this salient feature should not be omitted.

The second important point of these poems is that they are not written by Milton, the weighty controversialist and unbending republican, nor the solemn author of “*Paradise Lost*,” but by the happy and contented youth, studious and solitary, but not without an ample fund of humour; commencing life more inclined to the joyousness of Merry England than to the austerities of a theocratic commonwealth.

These are the points that I wish to make clear, and I think it can best be done by summarising the substance of a few of the poems. I have resisted the advice of a friend

to translate them in Miltonic verse, remembering Cowley's transcriptions of his own.

There is a bit of juvenile fun in the epigram on gunpowder plot.

"James scoffed at purgatorial fire and the idea that heaven could not be reached without it. This made the Latin monster with three crowns gnash his teeth and swear that if ever James reached heaven only through fire would the way lie open. O! how nearly did you prophesy the doleful truth, for nearly did he enter the ethereal plains whirled by Tartarean flames, a scorched soul." The other epigrams on the same subject are similar. But the verses entitled the "Fifth of November," written when he was only sixteen, are a more ambitious production. We all revere the memory of "Pius Aeneas;" if we do not have similar feelings for Pius Jacobus it is not Milton's fault.

"Now pious James descends from furthest north, and sways the Trojan people and far-extending kingdoms of Albion, and now inviolate faith has joined the English sceptre and the Scot. Happy in peace and rich, secure he sits on his new throne from hidden enemy. [But not for long was pious Jacob to enjoy this blissful state for] "the fierce tyrant who rules ignifluous Acheron, the father of the Eumenides, the wandering exile from Olympus, perchance was roaming o'er the earthy globe, counting his companions in crime and faithful slaves, the future participators of his kingdom. [On he goes doing no good in his travels, as you may imagine, till] the white fields on the wave sounding rocks appear, and the land dear to the sea god, who received its name from the son of Neptune, that son who hesitated not to swim the sea and defy to mortal combat the fierce Amphitryoniades before the cruel times of fallen Troy."

But when he saw this land in wealth and blissful peace, the fields grown fat with Ceres' gifts, and what distressed him most a people worshipping the spirit of the true God, he broke into sighs savoring [olentia] of lurid sulphur and Tartarean fires. "Having traversed all the earth, only this have I found to weep over," quoth he, "but if my power avails ought not long shall they go unpunished."

The adventurous traveller continues his journey to the

Ausonian lands, and at eve rests on the Citadel of Quirinus. There he sees Tricoronifer (pope) borne round the city on the shoulders of men, carrying his Gods of bread; kings with submissive knee and a long procession of mendicant friars bearing wax candles in their hands, go before him, blind ones born in Cimmerian darkness, and there prolonging it. This is the evening sacred to Peter, and as they march into the temple blazing with innumerable torches, the noise of the singers puts the Bacchanalian orgies to shame.

These solemn rites performed, night silently relinquishes the embraces of ancient Erebus and spurs her rapid steeds. And meanwhile the ruler of princes, the inheritor of Phlegeton retires, and his connubial couch [Thalamus] "for the secret adulterer does not prolong the fruitless nights without a tender concubine." But hardly had he closed his eyes when the black lord of shades appears disguised as a Franciscan friar, and "do you sleep my son, says he, while the barbarous Britons scorn your triple diadem. Awake, and show the power of your anathema and the apostolic keys; revenge the submerged fleet of Spain and the bodies of so many of your saints put to a shameful death by the Amazonian virgin that so lately reigned. 'Tis vain to strive by open war, but cunningly use fraud. For heretics all nets are lawful. Already has their great monarch assembled from all his lands his nobles and venerable chiefs, by placing fire of nitrate dust in the lowest recesses of his palace, all you will send in cinders dismembered through the air. At your command your faithful ones in England will assemble, and while confusion reigns France and the Spaniard will invade their land." The false friar retires to Lethe, and rosy Tithonia, opening the Eoan portals, introduces daylight.

A description follows of the cave of Phonos and Prodotes (murder and treachery), two very undesirable gentlemen, who have been for many centuries faithful henchmen of Rome; and it is hard to decide whether Virgil or Spencer served here as models. The high priest of Babylon invokes the pair, and dismisses them to Britain on their elevating errand.

The Tower of Fame is in the next scene, which bears a striking resemblance to Dan Chaucer's; it is higher than

Athos or Pelion, super-imposed on Ossa. Fame herself sits on the summit gathering and diffusing news, reliable and otherwise. God, by whose motion the eternal fires are tempered, having sent a preliminary thunder-bolt, thus speaks while the earth trembles: "Fame art thou silent, or are the infamous machinations of the papists unknown to thee, against me and my Britons, or the new slaughter meditated against a sceptre-wielding Jacob?"

It was enough; at once she obeyed the commands of the Thunderer, and scattered wide the report, first ambiguously, then clearly describing the plot and the authors. All marvelled at the news and feared—young men and maidens, as well as weak old men. The Ethereal Father from on high has pity on his people, and opposes himself to the wicked attempts of the Papists. Captured, they are hurried away to sharp punishment; but pious incense and grateful honours are offered to God. All the cross roads smoke with festive fires and the juvenile throng in chorus sings: "There is no day in all the year more famous than the fifth of November."

Here we have Milton, a typical English youth of the Elizabethan age, burning with enthusiasm for everything British and Protestant. He goes into raptures on the beauty of English women in his verses to Carlo Diodati:—

To British maids the glory first belongs;
 Suffice the foreign they can follow next.
 And thou great city, by Dardanians built,
 Afar conspicuous by thy tower crown'd head.
 London, thrice happy that within thy walls,
 Thou circlest whatso'er on earth is best.
 Not all the stars that in a cloudless sky
 To the Endymian goddess pay their court
 Are for their form and splendor so distinct
 As are the maids that radiate thy streets.

The seventh eulogy on his love at first sight is very pretty, and it is interesting to compare it with its prototype in the first book of Ovid's "*Metamorphosis*." The incident is practically the same. Like Apollo he scorns

Cupid, the unwarlike boy, who revenges himself by shooting his dart, and he falls in love with a lady he meets by chance. In his case the damsel disappears to be seen again no more, while Apollo had, at any rate, the laurel to remember Daphne by. Nowhere is Milton's command of language more conspicuous; the imitation is perfect, but there is no transcribing.

The nearest approach to originality we find in Milton's tribute to his father. The setting, like in all the others, is artificial, but the heartfelt gratitude is real. The Muse forgets less meaning sounds, and with audacious wings rises in duty to an honoured parent.

"This song, in whatever degree acceptable to thee, my dearest father," he says, "I dedicate a tribute small, although all gifts were small in comparison to thy numerous benefits, I have no other riches than those bestowed on me by Clio. Nor do thou despise the poet's song, a gift divine which retains the vestiges of the Promethean fire. The god's love song, it is song can repel fearful Tartarus, it unites the gods of the deep, and with triple hard adamant coerces the Manes." And so forth through much classic legends and similes ending with 'such praises has the bard from song.' Consider not the muses vain and poor, by whose gift thyself art skilled a thousand sounds to wed to numbers fit and change the tuneful voice in thousand tones, and worthily art heir to Arion's name. How can it surprise thee that I should be born a poet, joined to thee so nearly in dear relationship, or that we should follow cognate arts and studies. Phœbus, himself wishing to divide himself, gave different presents to the son and father, and the divided god we have in common. But no thou only fainest to scorn the Camœnæ; because, father, thou commandest me not to go where the wide road lies open to wealth and where the golden hope of accumulating riches resplends, nor didst thou constrain me to the law, the ill-protected right of nations, to strain mine ears with senseless clamour. But rather desiring a cultured mind to cherish, far from the city throng thou letest me go in quiet seclusion, and sufferest me to enjoy the lovely leisure of the

Aonian shores, Apollo's comrade. I will not recall the common goodness of a dear parent; things greater call me. 'Twas by thy munificence that, when the richness of the Roman tongue was opened to me and the graces of Latium, and the sublime eloquence of the magniloquent Greeks, well fitted for the mouth of Jove, thou badest me add the flowers that spring from France and the new Italian speech, and the mysteries of which the Hebrew poet speaks. Lastly, whatever heaven above, or earth beneath, the air between and ever moving sea contain, if known it can be, through thee it shall be known."

If Jupiter, above, all things had given,
No more I could have had excepting heaven.

I therefore, although a part but small of the cultured mass, shall yet sit crowned with conquering ivy and laurel. No more obscure among the lazy throng shall I be subject to their vulgar gaze. But since to thy deserts I cannot give by deeds repayment equal to thy gifts, suffice with grateful heart and faithful mind, I have recalled thy benefits.

And you my songs, the early sport of youth,
Could you but hope to last perpetual years,
Survive your master's death and keep the light,
Orcus avoiding and oblivion dark;
Perchance these praises of an honored name
You might retain for ages yet to come.

We will not dwell at length on all these youthful productions. Perhaps the ode to Mansus exhibits most of what the people it was written for would call *bravura*; to us it is chiefly interesting for Manso's associations with Tasso and Milton's expressed intention of writing an Arthurian Epic.

In the "Epitaphium Damonis" he showed how well he could imitate Virgilian Bucolics, deriving thence the names of his actors, as Dante had done before him. The grief for his friend is completely buried under classical allusions, and the oft-repeated line, *Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni* (Go home unfed, my lambs,

your master can't attend to you) does not impress us moderns with the bitterness of his sorrow.

Even when writing to the pious Protestant pastor, Thomas Young (who is pictured with his sweet wife, their dear offspring in her bosom, he reading large volumes of the ancient Father's or God's Holy Bible; or saturating tender souls with heavenly dew, the great work of religion), the letter is sent off under the auspices of the heathen gods. "I myself will solicit Æolus, who refrains the winds in Sicilian caves, and the lithesome gods, and blue-eyed Dorida accompanied by her nymphs that they may give you a peaceful transit through their kingdoms."

But through all these Latin compositions the fact is forcibly brought before us that they were a preparation for a great epic that should make his name immortal. There is matter in nearly all of them which was utilized in his great work, and his style modelled on the best Roman examples is everywhere apparent.

In dealing, therefore, with any work purporting to come from his hand, we must ask ourselves the question does it agree with the manner of writing either of his juvenile or mature period, and if not we must reluctantly reject it. The test which the *Times* critic applies to the book discovered by the Rev. W. Begley, the "Nova Solyma," attributed to Milton, is, I think, erroneous. He says:—"There are traces of juvenility in it which are certainly not to be found elsewhere in Milton and also for all its seriousness, traces of a sportive good fellowship alien to the intensity of the poet's temper."

Now I submit this is precisely what we should have expected from an early work of Milton. The author of "Paradise Regained" could write to a friend:—

"I, with an empty belly, send you health,
Which you may lack although your own be full."

The translator of the "*Nova Solyma*" has, I think, made out a very strong case in favour of its genuineness. I have only read the Latin examples and hastily glanced through the arguments. But if the test of style holds good, and my argument be valid, that all Milton's early work marks the advent of his great Epic, this is just the kind of preliminary flight we should have expected. It bears exactly the same relationship to "*Paradise Lost*" that the "*Vita Nuova*" and "*Convitto*" have to the "*Divina Commedia*." Independently of the question of authorship, it is a delightful work, and will be a pleasant companion when the whole Latin text is printed in portable form. There is one argument which I think the discoverer has not sufficiently pressed, and that is the great points of resemblance between the Armada fragment and the "*Fifth of November*" in incident language and description. The "*Travels of Satan*" are almost identical save that he goes to the bed-side of Philip instead of to the Pope. The cave of Terror is another cave of Phonos, with the necessary variation of companionships. The phraseology is very similar—one is under "*aeterna caligine noctis*," the other "*sub nocte perenni*," and so the rocks are here "*praeruptaque saxa*," and there "*minax lapsuris undique saxis*."

In any case it is a work that deserves careful study, for if genuine, unlike the discovery of the theological treatise noticed by Macaulay to be laid aside and forgotten, it will give us an insight into the formation of the poet's mind such as is to be found in no other work from his pen.





CHARLES LAMB AS POET.

By JOHN MORTIMER.

MUCH as I love the gentle Elia as a prose writer, I must confess to some slight neglect of him on the poetical side. While the essays and correspondence on my shelves have been read and re-read until the volumes which contain them have come to wear the appearance of long use in a circulating library the pages wherein are gathered those much less numerous leaves of verse bear no such marks of frequent handling. I am not concerned, however, to explain the why and wherefore of this seeming disregard, for after all it is but seeming. In a general way I have been familiar with his poetry, and some of his lines have an enduring place in my memory. Nothing that Charles Lamb wrote can be a matter of indifference to his devotees, but after all it is not as a poet, but as a prose writer that one finds in him the most delightful companionship. The secret of his charm, as we all know, is the revelation in what he wrote of his own inimitable personality, and the fuller portraiture is, of course, to be found in his prose. Certain limnings, however, of a distinct and valuable kind are supplied in his poetry for, as Canon Ainger says, "Lamb put so much of his personal history into his verse that when so presented it forms a delightful running commentary upon his life and education." It is from this standpoint, rather than the critical one, that I propose, as a pleasant exercise, to glance again

over the versified pages with the view of tracing their genesis and the conditions under which they were produced, making use, to this end, of such side-lights as are to be met with in Lamb's correspondence.

Tennyson wrote of "poets' seasons when they flower," and the first reference to such a season in Lamb's case indicates one of the darkest, and occurs in a letter to Coleridge, dated May 27th, 1796. In the previous year Lamb had been compelled to go into retreat for some weeks by reason of the overclouding of his mind, and, writing to his friend, he says:—"The sonnet I send you has small merit as poetry, but you will be curious to read it when I tell you it was written in my prison-house in one of my lucid intervals." The lines are addressed to his sister and commence thus:—

If from my lips some angry accents fell,
Peevish complaint or harsh reproof unkind,
'Twas but the error of a sickly mind,
And troubled thoughts clouding the pure well,
And waters clear of reason, and for me,
Let this my verse the poor atonement be.

It was within the sonnet's narrow ground that Lamb found his readiest form of expression. Of other efforts he says to Coleridge:—"As to my blank verse, I am so dismally slow and sterile of ideas (I speak from my heart) that I must question if it will ever come to any issue. I have hitherto only hammered out a few independent unconnected snatches not in a capacity to be sent." In the sonnet he reveals at this season not only his love for his sister but for that other fair-haired mild-eyed maid, the love which knew no fruition. To Coleridge he submits his sonnets, and other subsequent poetical exercises discussing freely with him their merits and demerits. In the

correspondence there are evidences of critical censorship, as, when Lamb says of one effusion, "The next retains a few lines from a sonnet of mine which you once remarked 'had no body of thought' in it. I agree with you, but have reserved a part of it. I flatter myself that you will like it." It is the one commencing thus:—

A timid grace sits trembling in her eye,
As loth to meet the rudeness of men's sight.

Regarding this criticism he says in a letter to Coleridge: "I love my sonnets because they are the reflected images of my own feelings at different times. . . . I charge you, Coleridge, spare my ewe lambs."

While dealing with this disposition on the part of Lamb to "sigh his soul out into a sonnet," one may note, though not in the order of poetical succession, that in the one on "Work" he displays a trace of that peculiar Elia humour which is not too frequent in his verse. Thus:—

Who first invented work, and bound the free,
And holiday-rejoicing spirit down
To the ever-haunting importunity
Of business in the green fields, and the town—
To plough, loom, anvil, spade—and oh! most sad,
To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood!
Who but the Being unblest, alien from good—
Sabbathless Satan!

Another humorous glimpse, too, we have in the one written at Cambridge, and in these lines:—

Mine have been anything but studious hours,
Yet can I fancy, wandering 'mid thy towers,
Myself a nursling, Granta, of thy lap,
My brow seems tightening with the doctor's cap,
And I walk *gowned*; feel unusual powers.

In the Coleridge correspondence we come upon that woebegone letter in which Lamb tells of the terrible tragedy of his mother's death, which took for the time being all the poetry out of his life. "Mention nothing of poetry," he says, "I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind." A little later he writes:—"At length I have done with verse-making, not that I relish other people's poetry less, their's comes from 'em without effort, mine is the difficult operation of a brain scanty of ideas, made more difficult by disuse. I have been reading "The Task" with fresh delight. I am glad you love Cowper. I could forgive a man for not enjoying Milton, but I would not call that man my friend who would be offended by the divine chit-chat of Cowper." Time, however, brings recovery, and occasional adventures in verse. Twelve months after his mother's death he sends Coleridge a poem relating to the sad event, and which he says he wrote with unusual celerity one morning at his office. There is in it much self-upbraiding and heart-break. He says:—

Alas! how am I changed! Where be the tears,
The sobs, and forced suspensions of the breath,
And all the dull desertions of the heart
With which I hung o'er my dead mother's corse?
Where be the bless'd subsidings of the storm
Within; the sweet resignedness of hope
Drawn heavenward, and strength of filial love,
In which I bow'd me to my Father's will?

Other verses there are about this time dealing with the same sad subject, and breathing the tenderest filial piety. Among the saddest lines there are some written in London on a Christmas day, when his sister is in the asylum, and addressed to her. What agony there is in the exclamation:—

"Why is this so. Ah, God! why is this so?"

followed afterwards, however, by a more hopeful strain—

“Yet I will not think
Sweet friend, but we shall one day meet, and live
In quietness, and die so, fearing God.”

To this season also, in the order of succession, belongs the poem with its recurring sad refrain—

“All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.”

Among the blank verse at which Lamb told Coleridge he was hammering would probably be that belonging to “John Woodvil, a Tragedy.” He intended it for the stage, and sent a copy of it to John Kemble, the manager at Drury Lane, who, after a year had elapsed, told Lamb that he had lost the manuscript. Another copy was furnished with the result that the play was declined. Lamb had really no dramatic faculty, and no more than his farce “Mr. H——” would this tragedy have met with any success on the stage. In the prose of it there were evidences of the Elia humour as where one of the characters says to another:—“No offence, brother Martin—I meant none. ’Tis true heaven gives gifts and withholds them. It has been pleased to bestow upon me a nimble invention to the manipulation of a jest, and upon thee Martin, an indifferent, bad capacity to understand my meaning.” In the verse too there are many fine passages, and among them this:—

To see the sun to bed, and to arise
Like some hot amourist with glowing eyes,
Bursting the lazy bands of sleep that bound him
With all his fires and travelling glories round him.

Hazlitt says that Godwin’s eye, lighting upon this as a quotation, “He was so struck with its beauty, and with a

consciousness of having seen it before that he was uneasy till he could recollect where, and, after hunting in vain for it in Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and other unlikely places, he sent to Mr. Lamb to know if he could help him to the author."

Of this flavour of the antique world, which seemed to be of the essence of some of Lamb's poetical lines, there is a humorous illustration in a letter to Bernard Barton. He says:—"Is it a fatality in me that everything I touch turns into a lie? I once quoted two lines from a translation of Dante which Hazlitt very greatly admired, and quoted in a book as a proof of the stupendous power of the poet, but no such lines are to be found in the translation which has been searched for the purpose. I must have dreamed them, for I am quite certain I did not forge them knowingly. What a misfortune to have a lying memory!"

Lamb had a strong disposition to deal with witches, both in prose and verse. He introduced a witch into the original draft of "John Woodvil," but, apparently on Southey's recommendation, struck it out. He reproduced it, however, in part, and published it separately as a dramatic sketch. Lamb submitted this witch passage to that quaint friend of his, George Dyer, and in a letter to Southey says:—"I showed my 'Witch' and 'Dying Lover' to Dyer last night, but George could not comprehend how that could be poetry which did not go upon ten feet, as George and his predecessors had taught it to do; so George read me some lectures on the distinguishing qualities of the ode, the epigram, and the epic, and went home to illustrate his doctrine by correcting a proof-sheet of his own lyrics. George writes odes where the rhymes, like fashionable man and wife, keep a comfortable distance apart, and calls that 'observing the laws of verse.'

George tells you that you must listen with great attention or you'll miss the rhymes!"

There is an amusing letter to Southey, in which Lamb offers to go into partnership with that poet in the production of verse relating to the inferior creatures. He says:—"I am hugely pleased with your 'Spider,' your old freemason as you call him. . . . I love this sort of poems that open a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened. Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophised a fly; Burns hath his mouse and his louse; Coleridge less successfully hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass therein duly following, at un-resembling distance, Sterne, and greater Cervantes. Besides these, I know of no other examples of breaking down the partition between us and our 'poor earth-born companions.' . . . I would persuade you if I could (I am in earnest) to commence a series of these animals' poems, which might have a tendency to rescue some poor creatures from the antipathy of mankind. Some thoughts came across me; for instance—to a rat, to a toad, to a cockchafer, to a mole. . . . I will willingly enter into a partnership in the plan with you; I think my heart and soul would go with it too—at least, give it a thought. My plan is but this minute come into my head, but it strikes me instantaneously as something new, good and useful, full of pleasure, and full of moral. If old Quarles and Wither could live again we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part."

Lamb's predilection for the Quakers, so frequently made manifest in his essays and elsewhere, is nowhere more tenderly expressed than in the lines to Hester, the fair Quakeress met with in his daily walks, whose death was so untimely and with whom he never had speech. They

came from the heart of the gentle humorist, expressive of one of those furtive love episodes rendered all the more touching by reason of a certain mystery—suggestive silence which, like an atmosphere, seems to surround them. The poem is too well-known to be repeated here, but he is not a lover of Charles Lamb who has them not in his memory and does not recur again and again to those closing verses:—

My sprightly neighbour! gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
Some summer morning,

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day;
A bliss that would not go away.

A sweet forewarning!

Another of the best known of Lamb's poems is the one which follows this, his famous "Farewell to Tobacco." How often in his correspondence do we find him referring to the joys and woes incident to his indulgence in the seductive weed? About the time he wrote it he says in a letter to Manning:—"I have neither stuff in my brains nor paper in my drawer to write a long letter. Liquor and company and wicked tobacco a'nights have quite dispericraniated me, as one may say; but you, who spiritualise on champagne, may continue to write long letters and stuff 'em with amusement to the end." Later he says to his friend:—"Have been taking leave of tobacco in a rhyming address. Had thought *that vein* had long since closed up. Find I can rhyme and reason too. Think of studying mathematics to restrain the fire of my genius which G. D. recommends." To Wordsworth he says:—"I wish you may think this a handsome farewell to my "Friendly Traitress." Tobacco has been my

evening comfort and my morning curse for these five years, and you know how difficult it is from refraining to pick one's lips even, when it has become a habit. This poem is the only one I have finished since so long as when I wrote 'Hester Savory.' I have had it in my head to do it these two years, but tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me headaches that prevented my singing its praises. Now you have got it, you have got all my store, for I have absolutely not another line; no more has Mary. We have nobody about us that cares for poetry, and who would rear grapes when he shall be the sole eater? . . . The 'Tobacco' being a little in the way of Withers (whom Southey so much likes) perhaps you somehow will convey it to him with my kind remembrances."

Among Lamb's verses one comes upon some which were inspired by the sight of pictures, and among them is a short poem entitled "The Young Catechist." It begins thus:—

While this tawny Ethiop prayeth,
Painter, who is she who stayeth
By, with skin of whitest lustre,
Sunny locks, a shining cluster,
Saint-like seeming to direct him
To the Power that must protect him?

To Bernard Barton he sends the answer and describes the origin of the verses. He says:—"The artist who painted me lately had painted a blackamoor praying, and, not filling his canvas, had stuffed in his little girl aside of blackey, gazing at him unmeaningly, and then didn't know what to call it. Now, for a picture to be presented to the Exhibition (Suffolk Street) as *historical*, a subject is requisite. What does me? I but christened it 'The Young Catechist,' and furbished it with dialogue following which dubbed it an historical painting. . . . When

I'd done it the artist (who had clapped in Miss merely as a fill space) swore I expressed his full meaning, and the damsel bridled up into a missionary's vanity. I like verses to explain pictures; seldom pictures to illustrate poems. Your woodcut is a rueful *lignum mortis*."

Lamb is prolific in album verses. There are evidences in his letters that he suffered greatly in being called upon to supply them, especially to his lady friends. The applications came sometimes when the mood was anything but favourable for such trifling. He says to Barton:—"What nonsense seems verse when one is seriously out of hope and spirits! I mean that at this time I have some nonsense to write under pain of incivility. Would to the fifth heaven that no coxcombs had invented albums!"

On another occasion he says:—"Adieu to albums for a great while—I said when I came here, and had not been fixed for two days, but my landlord's daughter (not at the pothouse) requested me to write in her female friend's and her own. If I go to — thou art there also, O all pervading album! All over the Leeward Islands and the Back Settlements I understand there is no other reading. They haunt me. I die of Albophobia!"

Yet when Barton asked for some lines for his daughter's album, Lamb was a willing contributor, and sent those verses, breathing a spirit of sweetness and purity which begin with:—

Little book, surnamed of *white*,
Clean as yet, and fair to sight,
Keep thy attribution right.

and end thus:—

Whitest thoughts in whitest dress,
Candid meanings, best express
Mind of quiet Quakeress.

In his own album, contemplating the use which had been made of its originally stainless pages, he wrote some valedictory words, of which these are the conclusion:—

Disjointed numbers; sense unknit;
Huge realms of folly, shreds of wit;
Compose the mingled mass of it.

My scalded eyes no longer brook
Upon this ink-blurred thing to look—
Go, shut the leaves, and clasp the book.

Lamb's humour in verse finds its most lengthened expression in his "Pindaric ode to the Treadmill," which he describes as having power to *walk* men into virtue, and of

Instructing with discretion demi-reps
How to direct their steps.

His "Free Thoughts on Some Eminent Composers" forms a rhymed and appropriate appendage to his "Chapter on Ears." The genesis of this poem, if one may so call it, is to be met with in his correspondence with the Hazlitts, where we find him saying:—"Ayrton we had yesterday. . . . What a pity that he will spoil a wit and a devilish pleasant fellow (as he is) by wisdom. He talked on music, and by having read Hawkins and Burney recently, I was enabled to talk of names and show more knowledge than he had suspected I possessed, and in the end he begged me to shape my thoughts upon paper, which I did after he was gone." The lines which he sent to his friend are familiar and begin thus:—

Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,
Just as the whim bites. For my part,
I do not care a farthing candle
For either of them, or for Handel.

For me the most attractive and touching aspect of Charles Lamb, on the poetical side, is as a writer, along with his sister, of rhymes for children. In the production of this, and other literature, brother and sister worked together, and there is a glimpse, somewhere in Lamb's letters, of the two so occupied, and writing at the same table. What a pathetic picture is that of the author of "Dream Children" and his afflicted companion, exercising their genius on the fanciful and imaginative sides for the instruction and amusement of children, with whom only in this way could there be for them any human relationship! Very expressive, too, of their undivided lives is the way in which they blended their work into a sweet partnership, neither caring to indicate the individual authorship, so that it has been an exercise for critical and discriminating minds to rightly divide between them. It was my intention to linger over this poetry for children, and to renew acquaintance with that singular production, "Prince Dorus; or Flattery put out of Countenance," the story of the long-nosed prince, and how he got that prodigious encumbrance of his birth shortened, but the limits of this light exercise will not permit. Among the nursery and other tales listened to by the present writer, at his mother's knee, was one of a boy and a snake, which told of a child of whom it was noticed that every morning he took his bowl of milk and bread to a distance from the house and was afterwards discovered sharing his breakfast with a venomous snake, with which he had become so familiar that when the reptile showed a disposition to take liberties in his eating he would tap it on the head, saying:—"Eat at your own side, grey face." From whence the good mother got the story one knew not, and otherwise did it remain undiscovered as to its history, so when, long afterwards, one came upon it again in Lamb's

poetry for children, and evidently from his pen, it not only brought with it a sense of gracious surprise but has since served to connect those associations of one's childhood with the later and maturer companionship of the gentle Elia.

BEREAVED.

WHY should they sigh, "How sad his fate?"

In all around I see her face;
Alway her footsteps by me pace;
Her eyes dwell with me soon and late.

About my neck her arms are twined;
I feel her kisses on my lips;
Her love floods through me to the tips;
Her voice is borne on every wind.

The birds that thrill my soul with song,
Carol the joy she made divine,
Her heart still warmly beats on mine;
And yet they tell me she has gone!

They say she will return no more:
Let me have patience but awhile,
And I shall see her tender smile,
And hear her laughter as of yore.

For haply 'tis a game she plays,
This hiding from my yearning eyes,
Which ever loved the glad surprise
Of meetings in unstudied ways—

Soon will she weary of the game,
And blithely come again to me,
Dear God, how happy we shall be—
When—when our lips meet—just the same.

W. R. CREDLAND.



LITERARY LUMBER.

By ARTHUR W. FOX.

Haec non sunt nugae; non enim mortualia.

Plautus, "Asinaria," IV., i., 53.

THE top shelf of that private library, which is innocent of classification, is wont to uphold a goodly number of ponderous tomes, behind which many of their smaller, if no less weighty fellows lurk, in the snug seclusion of dust and cobwebs. The commonplace collector, if any collector can be termed commonplace, when once he has accumulated his treasures, rarely or never takes them from their place. Why he should have made such a collection under these circumstances, is a question which he alone can answer to his own satisfaction. It may be true that the contents of these denizens of the top shelf are not exactly lively; the arguments with which they are crammed from cover to cover may long have lost their point; their binding may have grown shabby with age and decrepitude. Yet it seems just possible that they were destined to be read by their vanished authors, who spent much time in their production with enough scholarship to have furnished a dozen learned men in these degenerate days. Why then should these venerable volumes be relegated to the top shelf of a library, where the difficulty of reaching them causes them to be left in their dusty covert unhonoured and unread? If their purchaser did

not mean to read them, why need he have bought them? He may indeed be possessed with what is termed a bump of acquisitiveness in company with the common or garden thief. But such a bump can be produced by the well-directed blow of a stout cudgel, and will not therefore serve as a sufficient explanation.

If the collector himself be asked to give a reason for his numerous purchases of books, which in themselves can be of no use to him in this world or the next, he will be unable to make a rational reply. The charm of possession is great, inasmuch as it prevents others from acquiring the same or similar treasures. The human mind is doubtless regulated by certain psychological laws; can it be that the law of the collector's being is to collect? If that be so, and it is as sound an explanation as many others in current philosophy, he is merely following out an ineradicable instinct, and helping to raise the price of second-hand books upon the market. Nor does he thereby increase the good-will of his fellow collectors, who do not appreciate an altruism, in which the shoe is upon the wrong foot. The mania of collecting old books has almost reached its height; the market-value of rare copies is too well known to render feasible the sharp bargains of a less enlightened or at least less extravagant age. Every catalogue shows sad results of the mistaken zeal of the eager amateur, who not only makes an exhibition of his own weakness but who is the frequent source of needless profit to that "saviour of society" vulgarly known as the *middle man*. Thus much literary lumber is put upon the market at considerably more than its fair market value.

At last an indication has been supplied of the nature of literary lumber. No definition will be attempted for two very adequate reasons. In the first place a handle would at once be given to the critical dissecting needle, and in

the second true definitions of all but imaginary objects are impossible. But definition or no definition, "that is not the question"—the fact remains, that an ordinarily sensible man, whose theological tastes are confirmed to the use of improper expletives to lend a grace to his conversation, will be found to possess a choice collection of the works of the Puritan Divines. He does not read them, he never has read them, he probably never will read them, yet there they stand folio by folio, quarto after quarto, and duodecimo upon duodecimo, cumbering his shelves and accumulating the dust of long neglect. He might have done far worse than have tried to read these solemn folios, which would at least have exercised his muscles by the mere holding of their ponderous weight. The Latin, the Greek, the occasional snatches of Hebrew he might have skipped without seriously interfering with the sense of the remainder.* These were the trade-mark of the bygone preacher, who had been to College, and were introduced as much to mystify as to enlighten his hearers. He would have found much to delight him in the grim humour of a past period, and he would have learned a strength of language, which would have scared his customary expletives into silence. Surely in no other works have there ever been more sweeping denunciations launched forth with mightier force or in more thunderous tones, while the panting reader rejoices in the ferocity and thrills with the Titanic vigour of those full-voiced writers, who were not ashamed to say what they thought.

But the fortunate possessor of these collections of sound and sound argument, of wild force and touching tenderness, of denunciation and piteous devotion, of solid learning and searching wit, contents himself for the most part with a gradually fading knowledge of their outsides. He has got the books; he has probably paid for them through

the nose, and he measures their worth by their cost rather than by their supremely solid contents. Thus he follows that vulgar standard of human judgment, which estimates a man by what he is worth, not by what he is. The dearer his purchases have been, the more he admires them in spite of their battered covers; as he puffs his evening cigar, he looks up to his piles of literary lumber and fondly hugs himself because they are his. If indeed he be compelled to shift his quarters, he begins to ask himself why he has cumbered himself with so huge a weight of unused learning. His wife no doubt adds her reproaches to his already troubled conscience with that dreariest affectation of previous wisdom, "I told you how it would be." Of course she did not tell him, until he had bought the books, when her posthumous prophecy was a little supererogatory. In that cheerful hour of removing, the weary collector, who now has become a blend of dustman and packer, finds out the meaning of literary lumber without the need of any definition; nay more than once he may curse his folly and his collection with imprecations too deep for words. Yet even then he will not part with one of his beloved books, but hoards them like a miser without ever putting them to their natural use.

Some philosopher has said, that a man may be judged by his books. Seldom has a more fallacious test been proposed. A man may to a certain extent be judged by the books which he actually reads; but when an ingenious collector, whose sole knowledge of books is derived from various catalogues, gathers together solemn and weighty volumes, while he feeds upon the more ephemeral peripatetics of Mudie's Library, his tastes are not to be tested by the books which he has bought. Many a worthy man, who is as innocent of Greek and Latin as new-born babes are void of teeth, has a fond passion for "Aldines" and

"Elzevirs." Why should he buy such classical texts? In the first place they are not usually good texts, and in the second he could not read them if they were. The print is of the best no doubt; but for all their owner knows of their contents, he might as well possess the "Shi King" in the original Chinese. Yet these are his chief treasures; he has got them safely, no one else can get these identical copies; that is enough for him, and he contemplates them from his easy chair with deep but distant respect. He only takes them down from their dusty elevation to tempt the cupidity of some brother-collector. The two worthy men puzzle their brains over the one or the other of these dainty little volumes, and silently echo in their hearts the sage sentiment of the old dame, "How much easier it would be, if them furriners would only speak English."

It cannot be denied that there is a subtle pleasure in the mere possession of literary rarities. Venerable folios of vast size, if worn exterior, solemn quartos wherein "the worm dieth not," tattered duodecimos and the rest form links with the men of the past, and their authors seem to haunt the library, where their works rest in undisturbed peace. Perhaps these pale and awful shades would be better pleased to peep over the collector's shoulder, while he was making an honest attempt to read their serious pages. That is a delight rarely experienced by those long-forgotten ghosts, who can but content themselves with the knowledge that their books are comfortably housed, though seldom or never consulted. Yet there is something of man's immortal part displayed in such stately tomes. The author himself has faded from the memory of a careless world, and only a casual catalogue preserves his name. But in his book some of his mental being has escaped the tooth of time, and the reader is

able to think his thoughts and to enter into some of the conditions of his life. Thus a book, however dull, is a solemn thing; it enshrines part of a man, who has once lived on earth, and is therefore to be reverently regarded as a bit of humanity preserved for the benefit of succeeding humanity.

It is something to turn over the time-worn yellow pages, which cost the men of long ago much time and study to compile, and which have been stained by the slender fingers of more than one generation. These have left their mark in various fashions. Sometimes a quaint couplet written in fading ink warns the borrower not to develope into a thief. Sometimes the name of a former owner is scribbled on many of the pages; sometimes fine old engravings have been given over to the tender mercies of the children, who have coloured them more according to the principles of fancy than to the commonplace tints of nature. But every line, every autograph, every wash of colour laid on by little fingers now cold in death sends a thrill of sympathy through the kindly reader, who pictures to himself the likeness of the men, women and children, who have thus left their marks. Sometimes the phantom of a grim crop-eared Puritan seems to finger the volume, which once he loved. Sometimes a dainty damsel in loose stomacher and flowing ringlets seems to sigh over the elegantly turned couplets of Tom Carew or Edmund Waller. Sometimes little misses in long straight robes and stiff ruffs, young masters in superb silk inexpressibles seem to take up the pen to improve some already perfect engraving according to the habit of their wayward fancy. One and all these spirits of the past smile kindly upon the sympathetic reader, from whose soul science and scepticism have not frozen the cheerful warmth of genial imagination. Thus old books have a deathless interest to those

who care for the past and love to people the halls of oblivion with the shadows of former generations.

If an adventurous bookworm, whose digestion is of tougher fibre than that of its human namesake, should dare to betray its presence in one of the valued works, he is sent to his "long home" and embalmed in turpentine. Can it be that the collector is moved with jealousy of that more persevering student of the insect-world? If the tiny creature were endowed with powers of speech, it could surely give a more accurate account of the pages which it has actually swallowed than the collector himself. The reflective mind cannot fail to fancy that the two bookworms, the human and the insect, are both partially swayed by the same inducement in the choice of books, the excellence of the paper and the soundness of the binding. If so, why should they dwell in enmity, why can they not agree upon the several parts of each book, which shall fall to their respective shares? Two of a trade are apt to be competitive, and perhaps it is useless to try to persuade these two objects of natural history to come to terms save by the aid of oil of turpentine. It is curious, too, that bookworms of the insect-kind should make a laborious livelihood by boring those very books, which have bored more than one human bookworm since their publication. Perhaps the collector so seldom becomes the reader, because he has no desire to suffer the same treatment as is meted out to his books by their most persevering student.

There is one serious annoyance in the collector's life, which constantly ruffles the serenity of his mind. Once and sometimes twice in a year the female portion of his household decides to celebrate that great carnival of tidiness known as "a spring cleaning." So long as they confine their painful industry to the rest of the house, he

regards their eruptions with equanimity. But let the fair cleansers make an inroad into his library and his patience flies out of the window. The female mind does not appreciate the presence of decent and orderly dust, nor does it usually realise the need of putting back books once removed into their former places. To its faculty of spontaneous generalisation size seems to be the only natural classification of books, and the result is sometimes perfectly distracting. But when there are twenty volumes to one work, the principle of size is abandoned and the twenty volumes are scattered over the shelves like leaves blown by the autumn wind. Yet it must be conceded that consecutive volumes were destined to follow one another on one shelf. Moreover, a book has a wrong and a right way up. Why then should gentle ladies, whose cleanly zeal is so delightfully out of place in a library, persist in turning grave tomes upside down? Why should they make holy bishops and courtly dames stand upon their heads by proxy of their works? To male Philistines it does not appear proper to see the famous Mistress Aphra Behn in so unsuitable an attitude, no not even when she is kept in countenance by the "matchless Orinda." Archbishop Laud may have played no enviable part in our ecclesiastical polity; but so far as can be gleaned from so ferocious an opponent as William Prynne, the indomitable little man stood firm on his feet, so long as he kept his head. Yet he has been made to stand on his head, long after he had lost it by the indiscriminate disarrangement of the nymphs of spring cleaning. A lady of "the cleansing department," when she forces her way into a collection of books, and leaves them after she has done her worst, makes their possessor lose his way in his own collection. Why should she place science and fiction, theology and love-poetry in a mixture so

ingeniously blended, that a thoughtful man seems to hear scientific demonstration, melodramatic pathos, droning discourse and rather flippant singing going on at one and the same time to his mental confusion and secret rage? If such tornadoes as "spring cleanings" must take place, why cannot the library be omitted, why should thousands of volumes be rearranged in a confusion worthy of the scene round the Tower of Babel, why should not one shelf be dusted at a time, beginning from the top, and the books be set back in their original place? One resource is left for the audacious book-lover, if indeed he dare practice it; that is, to lock his library door, take the key with him, and dust the books himself.

But if a "spring cleaning" creates such disorder in a private library, what shall be said of the overflowing collections of the second-hand booksellers? Here the odd jumble of incongruous assortments, sometimes alphabetically arranged, sometimes in most admired disorder, is fearful and wonderful. The permutations of sets of books taken one, two, or a dozen at a time would baffle any less acute arithmetician than the immortal Bidder. The arrangement of the dealer's window would seem to be governed by the size and tint of the covers of the books. Their titles and subjects seldom seem to enter into his consideration save in a sort of alphabetic fashion. With a provident eye to the improvidence of the worthy bibliophile he keeps his choicest books deep in the inner and often subterraneous recesses of his establishment. In the window is arranged a selection of volumes, which might well make the brain of the reflective onlooker reel if he were so foolish as to read all the titles displayed. Sainly and prim doctors of the Church stand side by side with authors who are neither saintly nor prim, because all of them are of royal octave size. Archbishop Tillotson

comes arm in arm with Tobias Smollett, Isaac Barrow leans affectionately upon the shoulder of Lord Byron, Mistress Aphra Behn leers into the face of saintly Hannah More, Beaumont and Fletcher sing their tavern songs to grave John Fox, Wycherley digs the sacred ribs of holy Richard Baxter, Ben Jonson towers above John Wesley, while Doctor Watts sings his children's hymns to the medley. Ernest Renan sneers at Dean Burgon, Martin Farquhar Tupper babbles to John Milton, who is too blind to take any notice, and wishes he were deaf as well, while a host of modern novels of loud bindings and superior frivolity tread on the heels of sermons of extreme length, not too much breadth and considerable density. Over all, like a humorous guardian angel, smiles the interesting collection of that eminent moralist "Mr. Punch."

As has already been hinted, amid these authors grave and gay, prudish and prurient appear gaudily dressed examples of the lightest literature of the period. The cover is usually the better part of these frothy productions. Someone has read them, as their soiled face betrays, though why anyone should have taken the trouble is barely intelligible. No indiscriminate abuse is here levelled at fiction. There is fiction and fiction; and it is only unfortunate that worthless examples of that invigorating class of literature should be so widely read. This kind of book is not to be dignified with the name of literary lumber; that is a respectable title altogether too good for such trash. Books like these are too light in any sense of the word to be called lumber, while their grammatical eccentricities and stylistic absurdities sunder them widely from the select circle of true literature. When an author strives to cover his own lack of ingenuity by turning his mother-tongue inside out or by outraging

morality, he may safely be left to slumber in merited dust. Be it never forgotten that triviality, prurient or spicy, is not literature, any more than threadbare sentimentality is art. Literature, like charity, is a term abused to "cover a multitude of sins;" but its reverend cloak is too scanty to enfold the trash launched into the world under its august name.

If, then, the would-be purchaser would find real literary lumber, let him dive into the depths of darkling corners and dimmer cellars faintly lighted by a guttering candle or a flickering jet of feeble gas. Here he cannot fail to find something to reward his search. Under the thick dust of the "rubbish corner," which has long remained undisturbed, lies many a venerable tome of ancient date, whose once handsome covers have grown shabby beneath the stress of age and ill-usage. Such books of a past generation may be literary lumber in the eyes of superficial critics; few may read them to-day, fewer still appreciate their real worth. They may be doomed to the melancholy end of pulp, that fresh paper may be made of their admirable material. Grave divines, whose works may have been dry enough in their own day, have been reduced to pulp; poets have had their playful fancies melted into pulp; pulp has been the latter end of scientific treatises, travels, ancient classics of many tongues and a host of other no less dignified worthies, who surely deserved a worthier fate. Nay more, the stately lines of the Mantuan bard have been basely used to surround small quantities of sticky dates; the fiery odes of Verona's poet have striven to melt the cocoa-nut ice of a Gothic generation; while the satires of Petronius Arbiter have covered the acid-drops of modern commerce. In spite of these abuses of such literary treasures, the careful student can find information and delight in their yellow pages,

and their typographic excellence might well fire the imitation of present-day printers.

Some indications therefore of the salient characteristics of literary lumber with suitable examples may be of service to whet the appetite of the true collector. It is pleasant to catch the chuckling laughter of an ancient worthy who manifestly enjoyed a by no means transparent jest of his own, and such worthies belong to every age and clime. Old books are full of unexpected bits of sparkling humour, which is none the less delightful from its antique flavour. If the original vintage has been good old wine far surpasses new; so old jokes, if they be born of a true humourist, lose nothing by age. The grim face of more than one old-world author seems to smile from the unexpected jest sparkling on many of his pages. The kindly reader feels that he is in company with a man who ate and drank like himself, and laughed and maybe swore not a little, but who derived much enjoyment from daily happenings, and who loved to shake his sides at a half-solemn witticism, especially if he were the author of it.

One of the greatest charms of literary lumber of most kinds consists in the uniform strength of the language with which its authors address one another. Those sturdy but by no means charitable Christians hurled words of solid strength and untrimmed simplicity at the devoted heads of their opponents with a vigour and aptitude quite startling. To take only one example from the vituperative vocabulary of John Vicars, the reader will find the following eloquent and expressive title, which will suffice to illustrate its author's sweet reasonableness. The little work published in 1646, which contains but forty-three small quarto pages, is entitled: "The Schismatic Sifted, or the Picture of Independents freshly washt over again,

Wherein the Sectaries of these times (I mean the Principall Seducers to that dangerous and subtile Schisme of Independency) are with their own proper Pensils, and Self-mixt colours most lively set forth to be a generation of notorious Dissemblers and sly Deceivers. Collected (for the most part) from the undeniable Testimonies under their own Hands, in Print; for the more fair and full satisfaction and undeceiving of moderate and much misled Christians; especially by the outward appearance of their Piety of Life, and a pretence of their Preaching sound Doctrine." Surely honest John Vicars here surpasses Carlyle in all his glory in the vigour of his epithets, and the phrase "*moderate* and much misled Christians" scarcely accords with the ferocious force of his language. With such sun-flowers of speech literary lumber teems, and though the controversy which called them into being is now as dead as Queen Anne, the strength of its language is refreshing to the reader, who is compelled to put up with the feebler vocabulary of modern disputants.

Argument conducted in a like lofty strain and with like consideration for the feelings of opponents rang from countless pulpits of that stirring time, whose ministers did not shrink from printing their eloquent effusions. In the House of Commons, or what was left of it after Pride's Purge, orators clothed their sentiments in language of unvarnished plainness, and pointed out the faults of political opponents with a power and directness which left nothing but impartiality to be desired. Historians of the period threw violent adjectives and tremendous nouns at one another, thus giving a grace and point to their works, which makes them highly interesting reading. The writers of the seventeenth century felt strongly, and they knew how to fit their language to their feelings. But the very vehemence of their characterisation of one

another sheds a lurid light upon the story of their lives, which could hardly be derived from any other source. When the Republican leaders smarted so severely from Peter Heylin's bitter taunts, that they expressed their intention, if they ever laid hands upon him, to promote him "to another world than that described in his *Cosmography*," it is easy to appreciate their indignation and difficult not to sympathise with a purpose couched in so grim a humour. Writings of this kind give an insight into the history of their own period, which is unrivalled, and the latter-day student who is accustomed to the subdued self-suppression of debating societies seems to catch a clear glimpse of the writers and the stirring times in which they lived.

Then, too, are forgotten poems, some prosaic, some nonsenical, some epigrammatic and some with occasional touches of uncommon felicity. The theme of love in the seventeenth century flows along in much the same sugared stream of incongruous epithets in which it moves murmurous to oblivion to-day. As love between man and woman is the same in all ages, as the men of yesterday and to-day express their unspeakable emotions by the contact of lips or the paddling of palmistry, so the men of yesterday used much the same imagery with the bards of the present. Most love-songs are written with the like pen of artificiality. From "The Song of Songs" to the fiery sensuousness of Swinburne, erotic poets have followed one another in their method with some slight variations in treatment, and the pictures of their mistresses presented by them would hardly please those extraordinary divinities, could they, like Pygmalion's statue, "take their walks abroad." A maiden, who at one and the same time was endowed with a breast of snow, a heart of fire, coral lips, cheeks of roses, an ivory neck, eyes of sapphire and

hair of gold, would be a rare compound of a winter landscape, a blast-furnace, the bottom of the sea, a botanical garden, a turner's shop and a jeweller's luxurious establishment. It may be argued that man or woman is a microcosm, and thus contains all of the foregoing conflicting qualities. Tom Carew evidently believed that each of his successive mistresses was such a microcosm, since he employed each of the foregoing epithets to say nothing of a score more of equal applicability.

Poets, however, have a licence to use words and comparisons forbidden to meaner men; but why one poet after another should repeat epithets, which have done duty so long as to have lost their pristine freshness, is a question which only poets can answer. Still, their little songs to their fair ones, however artificially expressed, ring pleasantly in the ear of the casual critic, and he seems to see the eyes of the fair maid brighten and her cheeks glow as she reads her praises in the ardent lines of her passionate adorer. The sweet sound of maiden laughter low and musical as distant bells across some still mere, peals from the past and the heart warms to the happy days long gone. The maidens rest beneath the green earth of some country churchyard, or slumber under the hard pavement of some crowded city now; their poets are fled with them, and their burning lines swell the grand mass of literary lumber. Yet they are not all gone, when an antiquary lifts them from the dust, the old world is before him in its full vigour. Peace be with you, happy lovers, whose loves and jealousies and trials are long forgotten. Your successors are telling the same old story in the same old fashion; soon they in their turn will slumber with you, when the calm reaper garners them into his exhaustless storehouse.

Near these lighter singers are sure to be found some of

those sonorous paraphrases of the poetry of the "Bible," which are for the most part so exquisitely dull, so utterly unlike the solemn majesty of the "Authorised Version." Francis Quarles with his usually dismal "Divine Poems," Cowley with his dreary "Davideis," Tom Carew's execrable parodies of the "Psalms," and the deep-toned Church music of George Sandys will put to shame the rhymes of triflers, though with the exception of the poet last-named, the reader will wish that the foregoing attempts had never been made. Literary lumber they are in every sense of the word; though here and there the student will catch a faint ripple of real poetry. He may indeed pity the piety, which could be content with so limping a Psalmody as the eccentric production of Sternhold and Hopkins; but with the "Divine Poems" of George Sandys he will be better satisfied and confess that here at least was a poet equal if not superior to Milton in this particular form of paraphrase. Pious these less known poets undoubtedly were; but it would have been well for them, if they had been endowed with subtler imagination and a more exact sense of rhythm. Still they are interesting; they belong to a time, when men, if they were not more earnest than the present generation, at least expressed their earnestness in a more earnest manner, and though they are hard to read, they must be read by him who would understand the century in which they were chiefly produced.

Not far from these drawling singers of Calvinistic divinity are sure to be found a few of the political satirists, who have offered their somewhat unsavoury incense to Thalia. No book of this kind is more highly prized by the devotee of literary lumber than that which is baldly termed "The Rump." The title is exactly suited to the contents. Occasional flashes of wit there are, and a few of Alexander Brome's verses fall within the limits

of bare decency. Lord Capel's poem, "Loyalty Confined," shines amongst its surroundings like a fair flower upon a dunghill. Not in vain did the Puritans win their nickname, when they made a stand against ribaldry of this kind. Still the student, if he would understand the manner of the rank and file of the Cavaliers, must read some of the songs with which they solaced their defeats, and which they roared over their carousals pottle-deep. That sensible men could have believed slanders so vile against their opponents must always appear surprising; but now and then indications are perceived of a respect for a brighter side of life utterly hidden from the Puritans. The tunes of these old ballads have for the most part passed away; but the perusal of their often highly-spiced lines summons up many a picture from the past. Debauched Goring rises from his grave to disobey orders and to lead his men to continual defeat; sturdy Hopton endeavours to check the disgusting ribaldry of his soldiers; while a host of others, great and small, makes the silence of the centuries ring with wild shouts and unsavoury songs. History lives in the slipshod lines; not indeed the story of mighty events, but the record of the deeds of smaller men, who make mighty events possible by their devotion to their leaders.

Biography, too, is fully represented in the hodge-podge of literary lumber, and commonly the biography of men of little or no commanding interest and of commonplace lives. Perhaps it is unjust to apply the term commonplace to the life of any man; doubtless if his secret thoughts could be written down with the deeds which he has jealously veiled from the eyes of the indiscreetly curious, he would be found to have thought and done something peculiar to himself. But the fact remains, that the commonest biographies of men of the past are

those of least interest to the men of the present. Worthy clergymen, who led blameless lives and who preached sermons rather below than above the average, have their story told in fulsome language by some parochial admirer, with the result that the subject of the memoir would hardly recognise himself in his portrait. There is something pathetic in this painful loyalty to departed mediocrity, but it is too frequent to be either serviceable or pleasant. When, however, that execrably confused and confusing "*Scrinia Reserata*" of Bishop Hacket is to be found, it will be well to secure it. That it does contain the biography of that kindly but shifty prelate and man of affairs, John Williams, is the pious belief of the author and the student. But that life is so shrouded in moralisations and needless glosses, that its course is as difficult to follow as was that of its hero in real life. He who would win undying gratitude from historical students, should make a complete index to the book as it is, and distil from its tiresome pages the actual facts of the life itself of the difficult character with which it professes to deal.

All of the biographies of past worthies are not so irritating as the foregoing, or at least not for the same reason. Peter Heylin's "*Cyprianus Anglicanus*" may provoke critical wrath by its too fulsome eulogy of William Laud; but its style is clear and good, and its bitter condemnation of Laud's numerous enemies shows plainly the light in which the little great Archbishop was viewed by his friends. Though Heylin is only less untruthful than William Prynne on the other side, there is much to be learned from his spicy pages. When Prynne published his "*Breviat of the Life of Laud*," he took care to add bitter comments of his own to the autobiography of his foe; nor indeed could impartiality be expected from one who had had his ears twice cropped through the tender

mercies of the Archbishop. No book is so tedious nor yet so interesting, when the difficulties of its style have been mastered, as the cantankerous Presbyterian's "Canterbury's Doom," which is unreadable by the uninitiated, but which casts much light upon the hardships of the trial of Laud. It is one of the collector's prizes, and should it contain the portraits of Laud and Prynne, he who looks at them will easily realise the enmity which parted two men of such manifest strength of will, not to say, dogged obstinacy.

More interesting than Prynne, if it can be found, is Clement Walker's virulent "History of Independency." Here, at least, are life and vigour with more than a modicum of highly seasoned truth. If he be not preternaturally solemn, the reader will greatly enjoy the honest little Presbyterian's tirades against the mighty Protector. He had some reason for his animosity; he saw the inside of a prison because of his plainness of speech, and a cool cell has a wonderful power of setting the prisoner's temper on fire. The three parts of the little work are rare now, and the fourth part by another hand is perhaps rarer still; they lie hidden beneath extensive piles of literary lumber, whence only a patient search can bring them once more to light. Yet the trouble is well repaid; the book itself is spiteful, but exceptionally entertaining, and if its author viewed his persecutor somewhat asquint, the caricature thus presented is only the more valuable. If we are to truly understand Cromwell, we must at least view him with the eyes of his Presbyterian opponents, amongst whom Clement Walker was one of the most honest and most prejudiced. Moreover, there is an old cartoon in the second part of this bitter pamphlet, which gives a wonderfully accurate likeness of the Puritan dictator looking grimly forth from a host of allegorical misrepresentations.

The caricature is rare, and when it is in good preservation, affords a fine example of the limited wit and unlimited acerbity of those intemperate times.

One comment must be made, ere this essay comes to a conclusion, on the characteristics of the collectors of literary lumber. Some innocently give whatever price the bookseller demands, and so raise the market on their fellow-collectors. An unwise generation is this, which loses that chief delight of book-collecting, the making of fancied bargains. Others again will beat down to the fraction of a penny, that *rarissimus avis* a bookseller, who does not know the value of his wares, and go on their way rejoicing if they have secured something they do not want at half its market-value. The conscience of a collector is a natural curiosity. He knows the selling-price of a rare book in the catalogues; but if he light upon a less-informed dealer, he is quite ready to take advantage of the circumstance. His defence is ingenious, if not wholly convincing. The dealer, he alleges, has often given two-pence for a book which he is content to sell for a shilling, and so has gained a profit of five hundred per cent. He himself has paid a shilling for a book, which he knows to be worth four shillings, so he has only made a profit of three hundred per cent on his outlay. But he forgets that the book has an intrinsic market-value, as well as a value to the dealer. If then the former be taken into account, the actual value to the dealer of the book was four shillings, and not one, so that he ought to have made two thousand eight hundred per cent. upon his original outlay. It may be justly argued that such a profit is outrageous; but it must never be forgotten that the unwise indiscretion of the collector has often set a wholly fictitious value upon a merely commonplace book of no further interest than its rarity.

But after all literary lumber has nothing to do with the elasticity of the collector's conscience, which is perhaps the only thing in nature endowed with perfect elasticity. That is a matter which he must settle to his own satisfaction, and there can be little doubt that he will pursue his wonted course and make imaginary bargains to his own and the dealer's content. The task of the selection of literary lumber is difficult from the different tastes of the collectors; but there are some books so unique either in themselves or for the autographs which they contain, that no-one who really cares for the byways of literature can fail to be interested in them. A few of these have been introduced into the foregoing pages to stimulate the book-lover and to whet the envy of the book-collector. Whether they be of general interest or not to the "idle readers of a book-o'-ercrowded day" matters little. They have their own value to those who can appreciate good work even in the level regions of mediocrity. In any case it is a pious office to lift the veil of dusty oblivion from the cobweb-strewn works of all but forgotten worthies and to galvanise them to at least a temporary re-animation.





BRANTÔME.

By EDMUND MERCER.

IN the art of biography France is supreme. At one time every little noble made himself responsible for a view of the state of the business or pleasure—chiefly the pleasure—of the nation, or moralised more or less egotistically on the political, military, or courtly aspect of matters. Even an occasional bourgeois, upon whom ambition or accident had bestowed a key to the mysteries of human knowledge, must needs unlock the casket of his own resources, not always with the intention so much of enlightening his contemporaries and successors, as of flaunting the importance of his little self among a number of similar little selves, much as an ape might flatter his vanity with a mirror. Whether this thing is due to the French temperament—its magnifying view of the “I,” may we say,—or to the tempting charm of the language is a matter we may leave for the moment to the researches of, suppose, some German binocular.

With these more or less personal-public chronicles the France of the sixteenth century is a very Ophir. In the absence of a cheap post correspondence was infrequent and hardly fashionable; fiction was confined to anecdotes and apothegms, chiefly in derision of physical chastity; so we find histories, and, still more numerous, personal memoirs dribbling from fashion’s quill stumps in its lazy hours. Although such historians and biographers as his

contemporaries Montbron, La Noue, Agrippa d'Aubigné, Vieilleville, Palma-Cayet, and Pierre l'Etoile, surpassed him either in pure literary style and finish, or uniformity of plan and respect for the decencies of literature, Brantôme—some of whose works in print contain what no other man dared write,—in spite of expurgation, shares with Montaigne the literary honours of the century, and an equal portion of the glories of the apotheosis of the great Ego. The phrase, that an ignorance of Montaigne shows a lack of education, applies equally to Brantôme if we confine it to Frenchmen. The difference is that Montaigne wrote desultory essays on his personal knowledge of subjects of interest to every man, whilst Brantôme compiled biographies of men and women, some of no special merit or interest outside France, with whom he had more or less personal acquaintance, and in proportion to that acquaintance he gave occasionally a short biography of his subject and a long one of his own dealings with him. For readers of the three novels of Dumas père, "*La Reine Margot*," "*La Dame de Monsoreau*," and "*Les Quarant-Cinq*," the lives of many of the characters depicted therein will not lose interest in the pages of Brantôme; the man on the spot; a man who, at least had the honour of being permitted to bow to them all; a man who was everywhere and saw everything; whose life motto might have been the dictum of Julius Cæsar, "*Veni, vidi*," "*I was there, I saw it*;" a man whose two great regrets were that he was not at the battle of Lepanto, and that distance precluded his assistance at the massacre of St. Bartholomew. In the novels just mentioned, by the way, though Dumas knew his Brantôme as well as any man—indeed these stories are little more than glorified Brantôme,—we do not recollect that our ubiquitous gentleman is even named.

Brantôme, the man, was sixteen years of age when he acquired Brantôme, the Abbey, whence the name which he made sufficiently famous to obscure not only his family cognomen but that of his baptism. That little village of Périgord had remained obscure despite its Abbey had not this wit, this caustic and ingenious scribbler, this adventurous courtier, immortalised at all events its name. To such extent, too, that scarcely one but a Périgordian knows that no more than three leagues away is the capital of the province, once the property of the ancestors of our most amusing chronicler, to which they owed the name de Bourdeilles. The exact date and place of birth of our historian are, as usual, unknown. The dates vary between 1527 and 1540, the latter being correct if we follow his recorded age in the subsequent events of his life; the place, again doubtful, being anywhere in the provinces of Guienne or Périgord, with much good reasoning in favour of the province of hams, chitterlings, and truffles, as Rabelais hath it. Pierre was the third son of François, Vicomte de Bourdeilles, a Périgordian who had illustrious ancestors much in favour with Charlemagne, whilst Pierre's mother was a Breton, Anne de Vivonne de la Chataigneraie, sister of that famous duellist whose encounter with Jarnac is historic in the annals of fence. Nevertheless, Pierre continually speaks of himself as a "good Gascon gentleman," and we may believe him if birth in another but adjoining province, the vicinity of the Gascon river Garonne, an unholy skill with edged tools, an ignorance of fear, a ready mind, a certain bravado backed by the power to accomplish, a flexible humour, a mania for travel and war, and an incapacity to retain money, are the qualifying attributes. His training as courtier began indeed early, since he passed his first years at that literary nursery of

French talent, the Court of Marguerite of Navarre, sister of François I.; his mother being one of her suite and perhaps witness of and participator in the writing of the *Heptameron*. After the death of Marguerite in 1549, Pierre was sent to Paris to continue his studies in letters, which he completed at Poitiers in 1556. A younger son, his destiny, according to noble custom, was the Church, and that destiny, apart from custom, thrust ecclesiastical benefices upon him. His second brother, who joined a captaincy in the military with a deanery in the Church militant, having had his head shot off in battle as he was about to drink a glass of water—a dean appropriately killed by a cannon. Pierre, a mere schoolboy of thirteen, was invested with the just vacated deanery of Saint Yrieix, near Limoges, together with the Priory of Royau and St. Vivien de Sainte. To thrust benefits ecclesiastical still further upon his devoted shoulders King Henri II.—a kind of afterthought three years old—as “a recompense for so glorious a death” as that of the late Captain-Dean-Prior, bestowed on Pierre the Abbacy of Brantôme newly vacant by the death of the Bishop of Lavaur. The new abbot of sixteen took the title of Abbé and Seigneur de Brantôme, by abbreviation, Brantôme, which speedily became the name by which he was best known to his contemporaries and almost solely remembered by posterity. We need not picture him passing his years in conventual seclusion. He was not bound to take orders and did not. Whatever the holy nature of the churches and benefices under his régime there was nothing ecclesiastic about the owner of the Abbey, except his receipt of the revenue, with parts whereof he endowed sundry clerical offices to which he appointed vicars to perform the necessary duties, appropriating the remaining income for himself.

"Where was the harm," he asked, "after nomination and gift by our King, in a gentleman making provision of a benefice for some holy father, and enjoying the surplus revenue himself?" The first use Brantôme made of his surplusage was, following the lead of Charles VIII., to equip himself and a suite for the Italian war, which was now decrepit, having for 63 years been for French nobility a nursery of arms when it was not a cemetery for bodies.

There was somewhat of heredity as well as of fashion and ambition in this venture. Brantôme's father in his youth had secretly fled from the paternal halls for the Italian war of that day, and, like Hal o' the Wynd, fought for his own hand.

"My father," the son tells us, "would never be subject to anyone nor would he ever accept a post as ensign, lieutenant, or captain, so much he loved himself and his own sweet liberty. So we, and especially myself, have always had that humour, which argued ill for my advancement." And, further, "without boasting I can assure you that my family have never been stay-at-homes, but have busily employed their days in travel and war in France or abroad." So, after the fashion of his forbears, the year 1558 saw Brantôme on his way southward, "bearing an arquebus and a fine furniture of Milan, mounted on a hackney, and leading a half-dozen gentlemen and some soldiers, well set-up, caparisoned and mounted like ourselves on sturdy crop-ears." On the way, ignorant of the management of the new war tool, he was almost blinded by his arquebus but was cured by the injection into his seared eyes of human milk direct from nature's fount. Arrived, he served under Maréchal de Brissac, but one may doubt the value of his personal services or the glories of his career as a warrior. He seems to have

spent most of his time in travel and sight-seeing. Milan first, then Ferrara, and finally a long holiday in Rome immediately after the death of Pius IV., in 1559. Here, his pedigree for a passport, he was welcomed by the Grand Prior of France, François de Guise, General of the Galleys, who had accompanied his brother, the Cardinal de Lorraine, sent to assist in the election of the new Pontiff. Brantôme's sojourn was signalised by his being jilted by a lady of the name of Faustine on account of the ebb-tide in his purse, and chagrin sent him to the Court of the Viceroy at Naples in the galleys of the Grand Prior. On his return he nearly perished in a tempest "provoked," he believed, "by the execrable oaths of a Genoese galley captain." But, safely landed in France by Christmas, 1559, after a little more than a year's absence, he attached himself to the Guise family, who cherished the memory of his famous uncle, la Chataigneraie, assisting at a comic tourney between the aforesaid Grand Prior, disguised as an Egyptian woman (or gipsy), with a shaved ape for a baby, and M. de Nemours, clad like a Bourgeois, with a hundred keys by way of girdle, and witnessing the closing tragedy of the Amboise conspiracy in March, 1560. In December the King, François II., died; and, after being present early the following year at the farce of the Poissy colloquy at which the religious leaders of the Catholic and Huguenot factions respectively endeavoured to bring their opponents to what each side considered reason—all parties being open to conviction but refusing to be convinced—Brantôme, still in the Guise household, accompanied the Grand Prior with the escort of the late King's widow, Mary Stuart, to her wild realm of Scotland. On their return through England they dallied some weeks at the court of Elizabeth, who received the French gentlemen

very graciously indeed. Brantôme notes that she danced once or twice with François de Guise, to whom she observed, "My dear Prior, I like you well enough but not your brother, who had the bad taste to harry my town of Calais." Again, in France, just at the moment of the publication of the Edict of January, 1562, which gave the Huguenots liberty to exercise their religion in public, Brantôme, with the practised sight-seer's eye, noticed a subtle change. Nobility bore arms in the presence of the King, who, however, was only a lad of twelve. On the one hand he found the Calvinists assured of approaching triumph—they little knew the Queen Regent, Catherine de Medici—The Prince of Condé with four hundred gentlemen conducting ministers to preach at Charenton and the cry of "death to the papists" sounding horribly in his ears; on the other side the High Church party indignant, fearing the Church in danger, and the masses yelling a war cry of "Death to the Huguenots." Brantôme was safe in predicting civil war at hand, and his prophecy came true while the thought was uttered. For in his journey from Joinville to Paris to consult his colleagues on the situation, François de Guise, passing through Vassy on a certain Sunday, his followers, after insulting a Huguenot congregation, slaughtered sixty or so, and the thirty-six years of the religious wars had begun. Brantôme did not hesitate as to the side he favoured. An abbé, an attaché to Guise, he made common cause with the popular—the Catholic—faction. Hence we see him at the sieges of Blois, Bourges, and Rouen, and the battle of Dreux in 1562. At the siege of Orleans in 1563 he lost his protector, the great antagonist of the Queen-mother, François de Guise by the dagger of Poltrot de Méré, and attached himself at once to the suite of his son, Henri. But not for long. The following year saw him a gentle-

man of the household of Henri, Duc d'Anjou, but, being soon thereafter seized of a whim of wandering, he volunteered in an expedition by Spain against the Moors. After the troops of Don Garcia de Toledo had successfully besieged Penon de Velez de Gassera on the coast of Morocco, Brantôme bade them good-bye and left for Lisbon, where he paid a passing call on the King, Dom Sebastian, who bestowed upon him the Order of Christ. At Madrid, shortly after, he casually dropped in on Queen Elizabeth of Spain, who gave him a warm reception and a message for her mother, Catherine de Medici, that she wished to see her. Playing errand-boy to royalty was exactly in Brantôme's best vein. Off he posted to Paris straightway and joined the suite of the Queen-mother and daughter, Marguerite de Valois, delivered his message and the resulting interview of mother and daughter at Bayonne would naturally have been a failure without Brantôme.

It was the Sultan Soliman who next excited our historian's thirst for glory by attacking Malta in 1565. France having treaties with the Turks, could not openly succour the Grand Master of the Knights of St. John, Parisot de la Valette, against them; but with studied carelessness permitted any number of French gentlemen, Catholic and Protestant, to volunteer; and Brantôme, as usual, was among them. "We were," said he, "three hundred gentlemen and more than eight hundred men-at-arms. There also were Messieurs de Strozzi and de Brissac, to whom we deferred our good wills. 'Twas a little troop, but a lusty and valiant as ever left France to fight the infidel." They marched through Italy. At Milan, "that excellent armoury whose fabrications were so good that when Italians fell in battle the only way to kill them was to smash in their vizors with axes," they

dallied while Brantôme and his gentlemen comrades "were accoutred so superbly that we were greatly admired in all the Italian places we passed through, and folks knew not whether to take us for gentlemen-soldiers or princes so beautiful were we to behold." Reaching Naples, Brantôme paid a morning call on the Marchesa de Vasto, who had been so gracious to him nine years before, and promised her a good time on his return from Malta. Alas! this was not to be as the sequel will show, and Brantôme's life was embittered accordingly. But to our expedition. Its end was in the best spirit of comedy. After all this parade and splendour our gallant array of eleven hundred would-be warriors arrived at Malta to find the common round and daily task proceeding as usual. And the infidel? Beaten and back on his own shores. Nevertheless were our adventurers welcomed and that right cordially, so that Brantôme, with his customary impulsiveness wished to join the Knights of Malta. In this he was prevented by de Strozzi "who gave me to understand that I ought not to desert the good fortune that awaited me in France whether from my King, or some beautiful honourable, and wealthy lady to whom I was a welcome servitor and might hope to marry." Leaving Malta he sailed for Naples and his Marchesa according to promise. But it was an ill wind that blew the galley. The breath of Brantôme's misfortune altered its course to Terracina, wide of the mark. In after years he said of this, "It is possible that by means of the Marchesa I might have encountered a piece of good fortune by marriage or otherwise,"—what a thought for a man to confess to everyone!—"for she ever loved me well. I think it was ill luck led me to France where fortune ever favoured me with her cold shoulder. I was never there but what I was deluded with vain hopes. I have enjoyed

much esteem, much honour, but of wealth or advancement none. Did I deign to speak in Court or King's ante-chamber to some humble comrades, I was sure to see them well advanced, swollen fat as pumpkins, whilst I have not progressed a finger-nail's length. Meseems the proverb, "no one is prophet in his own country," was said for my peculiar benefit. Had I served foreign sovereigns as I did mine I should at this present be more charged with riches and dignities than I now am with sorrows and years. Patience! If it be destiny who has thus spun out my life-thread I despise her. If it be due to my princes I consign them all to the devil, if they are not already with him." These, however, were after-thoughts. At twenty-six he consoled his disappointment with a second visit to Rome where he found Faustine, now married, "but only on condition that she should enjoy as much liberty as before marriage," more amenable, owing, he thought, to his purse being better garnished than previously. Leaving Rome he stayed a month at Milan, taking lessons from a master of fence, one Tappi. "The folly of duelling," observed Brantôme, "thanks to this famous man was such, that never passed a day but wherein I saw a score or so of duels, so that one was always stumbling o'nights over corpses on the causeways." Continually trotting, wandering, and vagabondising about the world, we next see Brantôme at Venice hoping to find in Hungary the Turks he had lost at Malta. But herein he was again disappointed. Soliman, no doubt to spite him, had died. There was no invasion and he retraced his steps to France viâ Piedmont.

His native country would really appear to have a habit of playing tricks with him. On his arrival he found that a whole war—the second of the religious wars—had begun and ended without even a rumour of it reaching his ears,

and a third was actually in progress; whereas all these years he had been chasing the war-bird over half Europe without so much as touching a feather. Losing no time, he recruited a company of men-of-arms and took the field as commander of two companies, though he had but one. Almost immediately resigning his command he was appointed aide-de-camp to the King's brother, Henri Duc d'Anjou, the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Army, who held the post by favour rather than by merit or experience since he was but sixteen. Brantôme was present at only one of the two battles which constituted the war, that of Jarnac early in 1569. His absence from the final engagement at Moncontour was caused by a fever which he nursed at his abbey where his presence in this chaos of religious ferment was not entirely useless. On his recovery his address, as might be expected, was care of Charles IX., Paris, and he remained His Majesty's most humble and obedient servant till something more exciting offered. His taste inclining more to foreign adventure than to civil war, he permitted himself to be tempted by a grand project of Maréchal de Strozzi, nothing less than a swoop upon Central America and the conquest of Peru for France or De Strozzi, as the adventure might hap. In 1571, therefore, de Strozzi dropped Brantôme at Brouage, in Saintonge, to superintend the preparations for embarkation of the expedition, and astutely allowed him to believe himself a commander under the direct orders of the King, who, however, was too busy celebrating his nuptials with Elizabeth of Austria to be aware of the enterprise. This is how the battle of Lepanto came to be fought without the assistance of our benevolent adventurer. "I should most assuredly have been there with that bold M. de Crillon," he confessed, "but for M. de Strozzi, who trifled with me a whole twelvemonth with his

magnificent embarkation at Brouage, which ended in nothing but the thinning of the purses of such of us as had ships." For Brantôme this American business had one advantage, if he missed that great battle he was certainly kept out of mischief on the bloody night of St. Bartholomew, which ushered in the fourth religious war. An early event was the siege of La Rochelle by Biron, to which M. de Strozzi was ordered in December, 1572, and thither trotted his most faithful satellite, once again under the orders of the Duc d'Anjou. Brantôme had a busy time as soldier and envoy, and even had the effrontery to receive several light wounds. Here, too, were the apostate King of Navarre and Prince de Condé, who, to attest the sincerity of their conversion, took arms against their co-religionaries. Our wounded emissary had the supreme delight of lending the young monarch of Navarre his first arquebus of superb Milan make, light, delicate, and mounted in gold. Unable to resist the pleasure of trying so perfect a weapon, we are informed that the Béarnaise shot his old friends remarkably well. The siege being raised by the election of the Royalist Commander-in-Chief to the throne of Poland, and his departure for that country, and the treaty of June, 1573, having patched up a resemblance of peace, Brantôme was once more at liberty for the Louvre. Here his noble services were requited by his appointment as Chamberlain to the King, and he was created a Chevalier of the Order of Saint Michael; but we are significantly notified "without the wherewithal to maintain his ambitions." We must therefore infer that a pension of ten thousand livres per annum was nothing to Brantôme. His hope of fortune from the King, or M. de Strozzi's imaginary beautiful, amiable, rich lady, seemed no nearer realisation. He modestly admits, "I was well-known, liked and welcomed by my

master, the King, and the noble Lords and Princes, Queens and Princesses, who were in such esteem that the name of Brantôme was very renowned." But this manner of pay was not satisfying to a man whose earnings we are left to assume were merely titles without cash. Eternal hope, however, made him turn philosopher, and he supported the disappointment of cash payment by the good opinion he had of himself. "Many of my fellows have surpassed me as receptacles for wealth, offices, and titles, but never in virtue or merit," and he added, with a resignation—posthumous so far as concerned his prospects of further honours—"God be praised, however, for all things, and for His gracious favour!" This "God be praised" with its peevish gratitude is at least amusing. In reality Brantôme was high in the esteem of Charles IX., who loved men of letters, poets and agreeable story tellers. Hence the already noted pension for which our gentleman was sufficiently thankful, though he was fool enough to praise his benefactor a little at the expense—quite needlessly—of Henri of Anjou, with subsequently unpleasant results, a boomerang species of flattery. Brantôme was never guilty of much gratitude for mere titles which carried with them no corresponding income. Whatever grace his lips might have expressed for the Order of St. Michael, his calepin complained of the gift as one of which the king was too prodigal, not even reserving it for the nobility of the sword. "We have," he murmured, "seen councillors retire from Parliament, lay aside their robes and barrets, practice fence a little while, and the King immediately rewards them with a collar without the pretence of their having even seen a fight. This is what he did for Seigneur de Montaigne, whose business was rather to continue the writing of his "Essays" than to exchange his pen for a bodkin that became him not so

well." Let us say here that Brantôme has always a little light patronage to bestow on Montaigne whose pedigree could not be traced to so distant an ancestry as his own.

When the death of Charles IX., in 1574, made Henri Duc d'Anjou and King of Poland, Monarch of France, the latter hastened to his new kingdom and Brantôme—with something of the sycophant—hurrying to welcome him, actually greeted him at Lyons and, as reward, was installed one of his new Majesty's Gentlemen of the Chamber, without pay. It was the fate of Brantôme to receive these honorary distinctions; and this one he retained till the death of Henri III., in 1589. These years saw Brantôme present at everything of importance, sometimes an interested spectator, impressed figurant, or a mere nonentity in the last case also, full of sulk and discontent. He witnessed the death and obsequies of Charles IX., the consecration of Henri III., the famous quarrel of Sussy and St. Fal, and the equally famous disgrace of Bussy d'Amboise. His fidelity to the Court so long as he had an opportunity of gratuitous sight-seeing was impeccable. In 1576 he accompanied the Queen-Mother to Poitou to assist her in bringing back to Paris her son, that piece of spoiled wickedness, the Duc d'Alençon, who had as usual been plot-hatching. Two years later Brantôme was once more her travelling companion when she escorted her daughter Marguerite to Navarre; and on their solemn entry into Bordeaux he tells us, equally solemnly, that he had the honour of being near them on the platform. The patience of our courtier at length became exhausted with these rewards of unremunerative titles and in this wise. In 1582 his eldest brother, André, Seneschal and Governor of Perigord, Chevalier and Privy Councillor, died, leaving a widow, a son of nine, and a daughter married to the Vicomte d'Aubeterre, the Catholic son of a

Protestant Chief whom Brantôme had seen in Geneva, disguised as a button-maker, in company with Poltrot de Méré the assassin of François de Guise. During his brother's illness, Brantôme had extracted from Henry III. a promise several times renewed, that he should have the reversion of the Seneschalship as warming-pan for his young nephew. But at André's decease, on the discovery that he had in his daughter's marriage contract given that post to her husband, the King, wisely confirmed him therein, whereat the would-be warming-pan was much incensed. Possibly Henri remembered Brantôme's gratuitous disparagement. At all events the writer exchanged the service of the King for that of the Duc d'Alençon, a promotion backwards since his new master was merely a perennial conspirator and a physical coward at that. There was so little for Brantôme to do under the new régime that to his enforced idleness we are indebted for the beginning of those works "written and composed from his wit and invention." What he at this time let slip from his pen may be said to be the refuse of the inkpot, since it consisted solely of a few of the disreputable stories which go to make up the Second Book of Ladies', which is now known as "*Vies des Dames galantes*." This portion of the work he dedicated in manuscript in 1584 to the Duc who somehow survived the dedication but a short time. The death of d'Alençon spoiled anew the fortunes of Brantôme and of all those who had placed their confidence in that Prince. To be in his service was such a testimonial of bad character that one had need of exceptional qualities to survive in respectable quarters. Brantôme, broken with the Court and his own man again found it was not a paying business, and though his opinion in the cases of the Constable de Bourbon and M. de La Noue was that to turn renegade was the greatest possible

sin, he had not the least hesitation in considering the justice of so doing in his own case. Whatever reason he may have had to complain of his unlucky star there was none in his idea of turning traitor against his own country in the service of Spain. Frankly his design would have remained unknown to the world had not he himself in his old age made confession much after the manner of Robinson Crusoe when he found himself in the wrong. Why he remained loyal he explains thus: "One day in the utmost of my vigour and joyousness, an unlucky horse whose white hair presaged nothing of good, rearing, turned over upon me, bruising and crushing my loins so that I was for four years bedridden, utterly disabled, deprived of the use of my limbs, without power to move or turn except with a whole world of torment and pain. After this my health was never what it was. Thus man proposes and God disposes. God does all for the best. It is possible that if I had realised my plans I had done more harm to my country than ever Algerian renegade ever did to his, and on that account I had become perpetually execrated not only of man but God." Somewhere in the year 1588, by the skill of M. St. Christophe, he recovered sufficiently to make several short journeys, becoming stronger after each one. With the return of somewhat of his strength he must needs gad about the world once more, for in 1589 we find him present at the baptism of the posthumous son of Henri de Guise, whom the Parisians, after his father's murder at Blois, had adopted and christened Paris. We also learn that Agrippa d'Aubigné offered him a post in the Holy League. It is doubtful whether he accepted this for he had just as good reasons for not turning leaguer as for not being Huguenot. At the death of Catherine de Medici, the same year, once and for all he severed his connection with the Court of France,

and in the following year he seems to have paid his last respects to royalty. His final homage was to his paragon of women, Marguerite de Valois, the Queen of Navarre, shut up for safety in the Chateau d'Usson in Auvergne, whilst her husband, now Henry IV. of France, fought for his crown. Brantôme, on this visit, offered her the dedication of his "*Rodomontades Espagnoles*," together with a first draft of his version of her life. He was so enchanted with his reception by that princess, that he described her as "the sole remaining daughter of the noble house of France, the most beautiful, the most great, the most generous, the most magnanimous, and the most accomplished princess in the world." When Brantôme set himself to praise, he did not do it by halves. He likewise promised to dedicate to her his entire work, a promise which he faithfully fulfilled in the sequel. From this time onwards all that could be gathered of his life shows that he retired to his abbey at Brantôme. Condemned by weakness to a somewhat sedentary life, he expended his activity, such as it was, in various ways; superintending the building of his beautiful Chateau of Richemont at much trouble and great expense; fighting law-suits with his kinsmen, neighbours, and clergy, the latter of whom he accused of ingratitude, which one would think was not likely to be removed by the intervention of a solicitor of the period. It was a sorry jest on someone to have these law-suits bequeathed to them as legacies.

During 1594, whilst stretched once more on his rack of weariness it occurred to him to distract his immobility by writing a review of his life and of what he had seen and heard, or thought he had. So following the example of his neighbour Montaigne, he began to tickle paper once more. "Thus," said he, "does the labourer who sings

sometimes lighten his labour; thus the lone traveller talks to himself to shorten the way; thus the sentinel on duty dreams of loves and war-like adventure to beguile the weary time." The outcome of his labour was his "*Vies des Hommes illustres et des Grands Capitaines Francoises et Estrangers*," "*Premier et Second Livre des Dames*," and "*Anecdotes touchant les Duels*." In 1598 he lost Jaquette de Montbron, his brother André's widow, for whose sake he tells us he left the Court, to assist her and become solely her subject. But he forgets that he has given us another version, the entirely opposite and personal one already mentioned. This lady in her will acknowledged the assistance her good brother-in-law had given her in her necessities, and Brantôme pats himself on the back for being so good, but he leaves out of his account the fact that his sister-in-law more than repaid him by the care she took of him during his illness and onwards to the time of her death. Brantôme's ill-luck seems to have stuck to him to the end. It is a remarkable irony of fate that a man, who had passed probably a more varied life than any other during the days of his strength, should pass his closing years to his death in 1614, with the total loss of memory. How much more he would have given us of his recollections is doubtful since his work as published appears to be tolerably complete, and he seems to have revised it all very carefully. What would become of his manuscripts after his death was a source of considerable anxiety. He was first afraid that they would not be published, and he therefore left particular directions in his will and money for their publication, his second fear was that someone would wrong him in his writings, therefore "take care," said he in his will, "that the publisher does not substitute another name for mine, otherwise I shall be frustrated of the glory that is my due." His

glory is quite intact for the very least of his writings has been carefully preserved, and there have even been published under his name some few stray pages concerning his father, which in their comicality are the most amusing he ever penned. In spite of the express recommendations contained in his will for printing his volumes, none of his heirs carried out this clause. Perhaps it was feared, and very properly, that the publication might cause some scandal, and it is also more than probable that they were unable to obtain the royal privilege. The passage is worth quoting: "I desire also, and expressly charge my heirs to print or cause to be printed, my books which will be found bound in velvet, black, green and blue, together with a large volume which is that of "*Des Dames*," bound in green velvet, curiously preserved and carefully corrected. Herein will be found beautiful things, such as stories, histories, essays, and good sayings, that meseems a man will not disdain to read if they are put before him."

The manuscripts were deposited at Richemont, and little by little they began to excite much attention from the curious. Written copies were taken by several lovers of literature, and half a century after their writer's death their value was really appreciated, and they were printed in 1665, and, ironically, though they dealt with the 16th century, the 16th century got none of them. Brantôme's prophecy, that it would be easy to find printers who, for the privilege of issuing the works, were more disposed to pay than to demand payment, was more than fulfilled by their success.

The form of Brantôme's work with the exception of the Second Book of "*Ladies*" is biographical, and it is surprising how much he gives of the general history of France, and how much more of his own. His portraits form a most varied gallery of celebrated men and women,

and, as in old-fashioned meeting houses, the two are carefully kept apart. His *Lives of Ladies* was divided by him into two parts or books, but the first editor, who, we must remember, was half a century later than himself, renamed the first book "*Vies des Dames Illustres*" and the second "*Vies des Dames Galantes*." The qualifying adjectives *illustres* and *galantes* are evidence sufficient, in their peculiar use in this particular, that the literary man who was responsible for them had been educated in the reign of Louis XIV., at which time they were very popular words and bore a signification then that they had neither before nor after.

Beginning with Anne of Bretagne there follows a long file of charming or tragic heroines of the French Renaissance. Catherine de Medici vainly trying to govern France like an Italian Republic; Mary Stuart, the touching victim of Elizabethan rancour; Marguerite de Navarre, the rival of Boccaccio, writing in her litter the stories of the "*Heptameron*"; Marguerite de Valois, his pattern lady; Isabelle of Austria waking the morning after St. Bartholomew, trembling for the soul of her husband, Charles IX. These are from the first book. The second book we have seen was dedicated to and partly written for the Duc d'Alençon, for whom nothing was too gross nor too infamous. It is nothing but a congerie of the most disreputable anecdotes told with the calmness of newspaper paragraphs, and collected under a series of discourses headed like some of the "*Essaies*" of Montaigne. It may be dismissed with a word; it is not so much history as lubricity.

Of the "*Vies des Grands Capitaines*," one must at once say that it is not a healthy sign for French literature, when such a work as the last-named can be obtained in a modern reprint at a low price, while the present one is not

reprinted and can only be had for a high figure in the form of an *édition de luxe*. In this work Brantôme is at his best. He delineates none but men who made some notable stir in the public business of the time, with a vivacity and vividness of colouring that turn his pages into a gorgeous pageantry, with monarchs, and nobles striding the stage in the flash and glitter as its ordinary actors. Brantôme can give no broad effects, but masses a million details with a genius and sureness of touch that present us the picture with the same effect. Here we have the Emperor Charles V., there that paragon of Knightly honour, Bayard, François I. with the Field of Gold, and Benvenuto Cellini not too far away; the good Louis XI., who poisoned his brother; François de Guise, Grand Prior of France; the most religious Charles IX.; Henri III., spending a million livres on the wedding of his favourite, Anne, Duc de Joyeuse, and, at the dinner giving a discourse worthy of Cato, against profusion and luxury." Such another book is not to be found in France.

As a general historian Brantôme must not be taken seriously, and although he gives a good idea of a variety of historical happenings we must not always believe him. He was too near to see well. Easily dazzled by the proximity of his glittering heroines and warriors, his hyperbolic images of their divinity are all written in the tongue of a courtier accustomed to haunting the corridors of the Louvre. He is full of paradoxical excuses for his goddesses, insisting that beautiful ladies are entitled to be prodigal of their graces. He even makes a virtue of inconstancy amongst the nobles; meaner women must be constant as the fixed stars though the great dames may, like the sun, shed their rays where they will. He was, too, the born apologist of the Medicis and the Valois, and though he himself was often deceived in the characters of

his royal patrons, and, thereby, so to speak, abuses our confidence in him, he is the veritable historian of his time. His adventurous and unquiet spirit is full of that childish curiosity that prevailed during the Valois dynasty. Sharing all the courtly prejudices, and bold to a fault, he is not exempt from the fashionable superstitions; as, for instance, in his fear to rail at that judiciary astrology that his more humble but much more famous contemporary, the potter, Bernard Palissy, mocked so openly. A combination of Abbé and old soldier, he is bold, caustic, and credulous; servilely enthusiastic and as contemptuously disrespectful; at one moment refined, the next brutal; but in all he has to say of others his admiration and veneration are somewhat tempered by a subtle irony. What else could one expect from a man whom Henri de Guise, ten years his junior, called "my son," and Baron de Montesquiou, the slayer of Prince Condé at Jarnac, a man many years his senior, called "my father." He is equally indifferent to vice or virtue; between which he never seems to have been able to discriminate. The morals of the time were so utterly corrupt that he of necessity became accustomed to them. At all events he accepts them with a quiet complacency almost innocent. No writer has ever put on paper such disgraceful things, but no writer has ever put similar matters in quite so natural a manner without the slightest emphasis on the disgraceful side. They happened, therefore, he tells them, without criticism or argument, and with a sureness of moral indifference which is a guarantee of his truth. He is an excellent witness of the turpitudes of the 16th century, having neither the shame which would dissimulate or minimise them nor the indignation that exaggerated them. There is an individuality about all the innumerable

personages in his bewildering panorama, something thoroughly human about even anonymous men and women who appear for a mere moment as actors in some too frequently discreditable scene. He is a painter of individualism in contrast to universal idea or sentiment; noting with equal sympathy and warmth of style the amorous fortunes of women or the high deeds of warriors. Concerned about nothing but life our immoral courtier is equally apt to seize the fine traits of a Chancellor like L'Hopital or the evil ones of a Don John of Austria. A creature regardless of right or wrong he never blames the great but describes their faults and crimes as ingenuously as if he were uncertain whether they deserved praise or blame. Honour and Chastity in women are matters of no more moment to him than uprightness and integrity in men. We may attribute this attitude to his unquestioning acceptance and belief in the moral standards of society in his time. He is equally delighted with every manifestation of human energy, whether it be a mere display of passion or the exhibition of the power of doing well or ill, be it from some glittering princess, or proud and haughty noble, or happy and thoughtless courtier. He has been compared to Pepys but this comparison belongs to Pierre L'Estoile. There is very little resemblance between Brantôme and Pepys other than their common garrulity and readiness to put down on paper anything that came into their heads. His mind at the parting of the ways between feudalism and modernity is without chivalrous faith or patriotic affection. The world is his model, and if it provided him with a sufficient living and an equal sufficiency of pleasure, as well as work, the service of one monarch was as good as that of another. In Brantôme we are confronted with a problem difficult of solution. He will jumble together the most discordant

ideas, especially in morals. Sometimes he will represent a woman as addicted to the most infinite refinement of libertinism, and he will conclude the sketch of the lady by telling you that she was of good character; he will praise some ecclesiastic, relate of him anecdotes more than wanton, and will gravely inform you that this man lived regularly according to his station. Almost all his memoirs are full of such contradictions. The question is was he a libertine in order to sport more securely with religion and morals, or was he a literary fop without principle or design, confounding virtue and vice and making his characters all alike in that respect? The most probable answer is that he was absolutely unmoral, setting down of his characters their dark as well as their bright sides with little comment, as much as to say: "I know they did these things whether good or bad. To be true I must narrate them, but leave opinion to my readers."

As stylist Brantôme is essentially a writer, and some of his best passages can be regarded as among the finest examples of French prose. In person, of an ardent temperament, with a spirit restless and eager for novelty, lively in imagination, brave to a fault, handsome, gay, fond of following the hazardous chances of life, caring little where they led, he has used the pen as he did the sword. Although in some places his style is careless it appears to be a carelessness not altogether unstudied. His work, bright-coloured, easily flowing in manner, represents as hardly any age in France has been represented, the characteristics of the society of his day. One cannot forgive him for his offences against decency where the offences are so entirely unnecessary, but in a man of his temperament we may admit him to pardon if, in describing his characters for the sake of the true picture he gives us of the real men and women and the society of his day, he

alludes to their vices in a manner more blunt than suggestive, recollecting that the immorality disclosed in the divorce courts of the present was in his time one of the ordinary and expected hazards of matrimony.

His egotism is as forceful and graceful as that of Montaigne. In describing the life around him he naturally spoke much of himself, taking care not to neglect his own personality in the crowd, and, though he never wrote a single article on his own doings, in those sacred to others he has inserted as much of his family affairs as one can wish. One of his especial charms is that he tells his stories for the pure pleasure of the telling; speaking to himself without the least thought of posing for his reader. Hence this confession in a manner that reminds us somewhat of Cardinal Wolsey's farewell:—"Favours, grandeurs, vanities, braveries, and the gentlenesses of my good days have all sailed away down the wind. Nought remains to me of them all except the knowledge that they have been, and the memory thereof sometimes pleasing me as often displeases. Creeping towards a hoary old age, the worst of all ills, and to a poverty not capable of repair now as in my flourishing manhood when nothing was impossible, I repent me a hundred thousand times of the extravagant and boundless expenditure that I once made, regretting as often not to have saved somewhat to serve me in my feeble age when I lack that of which I once had too much; having the greater heart-ache to see no end of my merry companions advanced in rank and wealth, whilst fortune has repaid me with air and then left me with a grimace. Had she at least given me sooner into the hands of death I would still have forgiven her the wrongs she has wrought me. But she has done her worst; we neither live nor die as we wish. Therefore, let misfortune do as she may, I will never other than execrate her with heart

and voice. Yet do I hate an old age charged with poverty. As once said to me the Queen-mother, to whom I had the honour to speak on the subject of a personage at Court, "Old age brings us enough inconveniences without surcharging them with poverty." The two in combination fill the cup of misfortune against which the safest and most sovereign remedy is death, and happy he who, having passed fifty-five years of life, can find it, for after that is nothing but sorrow and labour, and there remains naught of provision but bread of ashes, as saith the prophet."

Perhaps fortune was kinder to him than he thought. If his memory of his brilliant times was so clouded with the sorrows of unused opportunities it was a blessing that, for some years before his death, she should have deprived him of all recollection of the past; since, having the rest of his faculties, he could at least pass a life like that of a child without regretful remembrance of the past or harassing thought for the future. As he was his own chronicler, we can only surmise that the quiet happiness of the last years was a complete contrast to the courtier life of this brilliant and unsolvable puzzle in French literature.





PIERS PLOWMAN.

By WALTER BUTTERWORTH.

THE term "Piers Plowman" was widely known and used by several generations of Englishmen, beginning in the latter part of the fourteenth century. It began in this wise:—In 1362 William Langley (or Langland) wrote the "Visio Wilhelmi de Petro Plowman." It was a satire in allegorical form upon the life and conditions of the time, dealing many hard knocks at the corrupt church, the oppressive rich, the debased poor, and the vicious of all classes. It quickly became popular. Langley made it the work of his life, frequently adding to it and probably even re-writing it.

In 1377 he wrote his "Liber de Petro Plowman. Visio ejusdem de Do-wel, Do-bet et Do-best." This included his former work and was an extension of it, with changes, to thrice the original length. It had gained, perhaps, in ripeness what it had lost in freshness. Its popularity still increased; it passed from hand to hand; many copies were written. Langley continued to work upon it, and about 1393 yet another version appeared, still longer, and decidedly more diffuse and theological.

These are the three forms edited by Professor Skeat and believed by him to substantially represent the several writings of the poet. No fewer than forty-four MSS. of the time are still in existence, testifying to the extra-

ordinary vogue of the work. The public fancy was caught by the pithy sayings, the spirited attacks upon notorious abuses, the championing of the poor, the obviously exact and thorough knowledge of English men and affairs. At the rising of the peasants, associated with the name of Wat Tyler, "Piers Plowman" had become a symbol of the down-trodden poor; and it played an undoubted part in organising the Commons against the misuse of power by King and Clergy.

Imitations soon began to appear. Of these the first was "Pierce the Ploughman's Crede," issued anonymously, about 1394. It has often been attributed, but erroneously, to Wm. Langley. Evidently some unknown writer observed the popularity of Langley's work and followed something of the same line of thought, as well as the same style of alliteration. His poem consists of 850 lines, and is a savage satire against the four well-known orders of friars. Though an able and striking writer he is much inferior to Langley, whether as poet or thinker. He is far more uncharitable and bitter. The poem is simply an expression of hatred against the ignorance and selfishness of the friars.

Another echo was the "Plowman's Tale," sometimes included among the works of Chaucer, but more probably written by the author of the "Crede." There is also "The Complaint of the Ploughman."

Of William Langley scarcely anything is known. There is no contemporaneous testimony. We are thrown back upon conjecture and small details scattered about his poem. Summing these up, he was born in 1332 at Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire. He was the son of a freeman, had a good education, possibly went to Oxford, became *clericus*, but not priest. He obtained a bare and precarious livelihood by singing placebos and diriges at

ceremonious funerals, for the souls of the dead. He lived at Malvern, subsequently in London, and later speaks of being at Bristol; married and had a daughter.

He lived until the last year of the century, thus witnessing the most important changes in the reigns of Edward III. and Richard II.; the four awful pestilences that swept the country, especially the one which desolated Europe and became known as the "Black Death." Events like the death of the Black Prince, the translation of the Bible by Wycliffe, and Wat Tyler's Rebellion had their influence upon his life and work. He saw the appearance of Chaucer's "*Canterbury Tales*" and Gower's "*Confessio Amantis*," as he elaborated his own life-poem. Finally, as he neared his end, England was torn by the deposition of Richard II. and the usurpation of Henry IV.

In person he was tall; in temperament silent, studious, brooding. He moved among crowds unnoticed, but noticing much. He disliked ceremony, avoided saluting those of higher rank, and was of an obstinate, stiff-necked and independant nature. He had a large stock of hatreds and prejudices, chief among them lawyers, mendicant friars, idle clergy, and the selfish rich. People sometimes thought him mad, or a fool, as he himself tells us. Certainly he was an independent thinker, going counter to the received habits and conventionalities; this alone would earn him the unflattering epithets.

His scholarship was considerable, though not exact. He was well versed in the Latin scriptures, the Fathers, and somewhat in the schoolmen. He often quotes the vulgate, from memory. The French poems then popular were known to him; apparently he knew nothing of Italian or Roman literature.

The leading interest in the visions of Langley lies in the plain, unvarnished picture they afford of his time.

We get an insight into the intimate life of the people, their food, drink, dress, habits, occupations. We see the kind of country England was; the classes which inhabited it; its governors and workers; its priests and worshippers; its folk at work and play.

Let us take a few scenes as examples both of the poet's work and of his subject matter. I will make no attempt to follow the course of the story. It is worked out in allegorical form consistently enough for a time, then it becomes confused and disjointed, with awkward transitions. The designing of a large work was not one of Langley's gifts. Sufficient for the present to say that in the earlier conception of the poem *Piers Plowman* is the type of a plain, honest, labouring man, seeking truth. He encounters many difficulties and sins (personified), receiving also much help by the way. In the later portion the plan is more vague, the poem becomes more theological, sometimes a mere tedious long sermon. *Piers Plowman* presently signifies Christ himself, the Deliverer from sin and death, represented in the flesh not by a splendid mitred pope, but by a ploughman.

Thus hath Piers power, by his pardon paid
To bynde and unbynde, bothe here and elliswhere
And assoile men of alle synnes, save of dette one.

At the opening the poet has a vision:—

A fair field ful of folk
Fond I ther bitwene,
And alle manere of men,
The mene and the riche,
Werchyng and wandrynge,
As the world asketh.

In this "fair field ful of folk" we are presently introduced to a crowd of all kinds of men and women, for it represents

F

the world. Here are bakers, brewers, spicers, butchers, weavers, tailors, tinkers, tax-gatherers, masons, dikers, delvers, cooks and their boys, crying 'hot-pies, hot,' inn-keepers, traders, law officials, sisours, summoners, sheriffs' clerks, beadles, bailiffs, brokers, and advocates.

Listening to and watching this swarming multitude we realize how slight are the changes in the human animal, even after the lapse of five hundred years. He may change his dress, his diet, his habitations, his habits, manners, forms of worship, his precious "opinions." But bring him into the open as Langley does, strip him "naked as a needle," and there is no mistaking the old Adam. He is our brother—our very self. The same feeding, working, sleeping, grumbling, laughing human.

Our newspapers and Piers Plowman tell us much the same story, in essentials. The grasping money-lender pursues his dubious way, his usury battenning upon itself. Tradespeople tamper with weights and measures. Thievery and harlotry abound in all classes. There are nagging wives, drunken husbands, wind-bags, or as he says, "a gloton of words," grinders of the poor, flatterers, those who make much ado of the rich and trample the needy underfoot. The women glance at each other's new bonnets, during mass. Drinking then, as now, played a prominent part. "Mene ale," or "farthing ale," evidently the precursor of our smo' beer, was drunk by the necessitous. It could be brought at "a galon a grote." Stronger ales were naturally preferred, even by the women. We find Tom Stowne taught "to take two staves, and fecche Felice home, fro' the wynen pyne." Another is advised to cut a stick and beat Beton, as she will not work.

Our friend the brewer was even then sufficiently sophisticated. Conscience had been enjoining conduct

directed by *spiritus justiciæ*, the spirit of justice, and calls down the following retort:—

Ye baw! quod a brewere,
I wol noght be ruled,
By Jhesu! for all your janglynge
With *spiritus justiciæ*,
Ne after conscience, by Crist!
While I kan selle
Both dregges and draf,
And drawe it out at oon hole,
Thikke ale and thynne ale,
For that is my kynde,
And noght hakke after holynesse.
Hold thi tonge, Conscience,
Of spiritual *justiciæ*,
Thou speakest much on ydel.

There is a long passage, too long for quotation, describing the doings of a glutton, very characteristic, conveying the effect of a Hogarth or a Teniers.

The church in England had sunk to the lowest ebb of spiritual life. Its officials were notorious for their rapacity, extortions, grossness and shameless worldliness. The Pope annually collected from this country some 20,000 marks. His legates, haughty and magnificent, were cordially hated. Foreign priests filled many English livings. Ecclesiastics occupied many of the highest secular offices. Marts were opened for the disposal of pardons, dispensations, and indulgences.

Langley fell foul of all this. It was his conviction that "God gave his sheep to be pastured, not to be shaven and shorn." Like Chaucer, he honoured the poor parson, who practised what he preached:—

"Christ's love and the apostles twelve he taught,
And first he followed it himself."

See, he cries :—

That ye preachen to the people,
Preve it on yourselve,
And dooth it in dede.

But very different are the prevailing habits. Here is a proud hunting parson :—

Ac now is religion a rydere
A romere aboute
A ledere of love-dayes,
And a lond-buggere,
A prikere on a palfry
Fro manere to manere,
An heepe of hounds at his ers,
As he a lord were.
And but if his knave knele
That shal his coppe brynge,
He loureth on hym, and asketh hym
Who taughte hym curteisie.

Another, who is lazy, neglects his duties, is fond of "Ydle tales at the ale," arrives in church just in time to hear "*Ite, missa est*," thinks full seldom of God's Kingdom and His passion :—

But I kan rymes of Robin Hood,
And Randolf, Erl of Chestre,
Ac neither of oure Lord ne of oure lady
The leeste that evere was maked.

We have an interesting description of a Palmer (too long to quote). He had visited many shrines, but had never heard of Truth. Langley sweeps such pilgrims contemptuously aside.

Pilgrymes and palmeres,
Plighten hem togidere,
For to seken Seint Jame,
And seintes at Rome,

They wenten forth in hire way,
 With many wise tales,
 And hadden leve to lyen
 Al hire lif after.
 I seigh somme that seiden
 Thei hadde y-sought seintes;
 To ech a tale that thei tolde
 Hire tonge was tempted to lye,
 Moore than to seye soothe,
 It seemed bi hire speche.
 Heremytes on an heep
 With hoked staves
 Wenten to Walsyngham,
 And hire wenches after
 Grete lobies and longe
 That lothe were to swynke.

The friars who over-ran the country met with still scantier courtesy. The poet pours scorn upon them. One is grossly sensual; another absolves Bribery and would have her place a window in the church. They have lost sight of their founders, Antony, Dominic, Francis,

The which him first taught
 To lyve by litel and in low houses.

Now, says Langley:—

I fond there freres
 Alle the foure orders,
 Prechyng the people
 For profit of himselve;
 Glosed the gospel,
 As hem good liked;
 For coveitise of copes,
 Constreuwed it as thei wolde.

But vehement as Langley was against public abuses and private vices, he was no rebel against the church. He

proposed no change in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; none in regard to the accepted dogmas. He recognised the authority of the Pope, but in spiritual matters only, not temporal. Above all, perhaps, he fulminated against the wealth of the church and her servants.

To us all, riches are, he thinks, a menace:—

Alas! that riches shal reve
And robbe manne's soul
From the love of our Lord,
At his laste ende.

Poverty, he holds, "is sib to God Himself." It is "pure, spiritual health." "There patience is and pride hath no might."

He had much of the rapt enthusiasm for poverty which bore St. Francis through his wonderful career. But apart from his faith on this subject, he describes very touchingly the hardships of the poor.

For er I have breed of mele
Oft moot I swete,
And er the commune have corn ynough
Many a cold morwenyng,
So er my wafres be ywrought
Much wo I tholye.

Women in "little cots" are shown, worn with work and hunger, chilled in the night when the little ones cry, and there is nothing to feed them with.

Wo in wynter tyme
For wantynge of clothes.

Ac beggaris about midsomer
Bredless thei slepe.
And yet is wynter for hem worse,
For weet shoed thei gone,

A-foote sore and afyngred,
 And foule y-rebuked,
 And y-rated of riche men,
 That ruthe is to here.

Piers lashes with his keenest scorn the lazy and hypocritical poor; beggars feigning blindness and lameness; or those who would drink and gamble rather than work.

Yet if they be deserving poor, he embraces them in love and charity:—

Thei are my bloody bretheren, quod Piers,
 For God boughte us alle.
 Truth taughte me ones
 To loven hem echone;
 And to helpen hem of alle thyng,
 Ay, as hem nedeth.
 And now wolde I wite of thee
 What were the beste;
 And how I myghte a-maistren hem,
 And make hem to werche.

Hunger recommends: "Hounds breed and horses breed."

Whatever subject the poet is handling, he has a way of breaking in upon himself to apply certain simple tests, generally through texts of scripture or homely, common-sense truths. These all find their roots in love, charity and a clean conscience. For him indeed, love and charity are one. "Without love," he said, "all the clergy under Crist, ne myght me cacche fro hell." I quote a few of these pithy passages:—

Whoso loveth noght, leve me,
 He lyveth in deep dying.

Forthi is love ledere
 Of the Lorde's folk of hevene.

For alle are we Criste's creatures
And of his cofres riche,
And bretheren as of oo blood,
As wel beggeres as erles.

Forthi loke thow lovy
As longe as thow durest;
For is no science under sonne
So sovereyn for the soule.

And but we do thus in dede (love)
At the day of dome
It shal bi-sitten us ful soure
The silver that we kepen;
And oure bakkes that mothe-eten be
And seen beggars go naked.

For though ye be trewe of your tonge
And troweliche wyne,
And as chaste as a child
That in chirche wepeth.
But if ye loven leelly
And leve the pouere,
Swich good as God you sent,
Goodliche parteth,
Ye have namoore merite
In masse nor in houres,
Than Malkyn of hise maydenhede
That no man desireth.

Forthi chastité withouten charité
Worth cheyned in helle;
It is as lewed as a lampe
That no light is inne.
Many chapeleyns arn chaste,
Ac charité is aweye.

Alas! that a Cristene creature
 Shal be unkynde til another;
 Syn Jewes that we jugge
 Judas felawes,
 Eyther of hem helpeth oother
 Of that that hem needeth.
 Whi not we cristene
 Of Christe's good be as kynde
 As Jewes that ben oure kinsmen?
 Shame to us alle!

Though the poem is largely concerned with the incidents and details of humble life, many higher topics are touched upon. Theology is responsible for some of the most tedious passages. The poet confesses:—

Theologie hath tened me
 Ten score times;
 The more I muse thereinne,
 The mystier it seemeth,
 And the depper I devyne
 The derker me it thynketh.

At times he rises with his theme to grandeur and exaltation of spirit. Instances (which I must not quote) are:—His conception of the created world; of the duties of knight-hood; of Death; of old age; of saving grace for all. The scene where Righteousness and Peace kiss each other, and the vision of Eastertide, when the poet awoke, and weeping called his wife and daughter to prayer.

And right with that I wakede
 And callede Kytte, my wif,
 And Calote, my doghter;
 And bad hem rise and reverence
 Godde's resurexion;
 And crepe to the cros on knees,
 And kisse it for a jewel,

For Godde's blessedde body
 It bar for oure boote;
 And it a-fereth the fend,
 For swich is the myghte,
 May no grisly goost
 Glide there it walketh.

There are scores of vivid scenes of contemporaneous life, hit off in a few lines. Often the alliteration helps to press home an axiom or a proverbial truth, making it cling to the memory with a quaint music of its own. I append a few such lines:—

Thou doted daffe, quod she, dulle are thi wittes.
 Crist and his clene moder.
 And dyngen upon David eche day til eve.
 Drynke but myd the doke and dyn but ones.
 It si noght al good to the goost that the gut asketh.
 When alle tresors arn tried truth is the beste.
 And ye, lovely ladys, with your long fingers,
 To a maide that highte Marie, a meke thyng withal.
 Percen with a paternoster, the paleys of hevene.

A comparison of Langley with his great English contemporary and with his predecessor, the greatest of all visionary poets, helps to bring out saliently his own characteristics.

Dante and Langley are far apart, though near in time. One ranks with the very highest, as seer, thinker, poet; the other stands far below, in each of these capacities. Yet there are points of contact, of resemblance, which perhaps help a little to the fuller comprehension of their respective works. Both poets were absorbed in visions and passed most of their mature years in pondering and

recording them. Both took for subject the spiritual life of man, and reproduced, with marvellous distinctness and fidelity the men and women of mediævalism, along with its cumbrous growth of political and theological thought, its feudal system on the eve of disintegration, its mass of legendary lore, its phase of creed and civilization all but outworn. Both, again, made their poems the receptacles of their learning, feelings, experiences. Both denounced the worldliness and temporal aggressions of the Papacy. Both discuss the Christian scheme of theology, cite similar pagan exceptions, and draw upon the current traditions. Satirists both, they were vehement, passionate, rootedly sincere, and their satire was ever and anon swallowed up in indignation.

Another figure offers a closer parallel and a sharper contrast. Chaucer was contemporaneous with Langley. Between them they reveal to us English life in the latter half of the fourteenth century, more clearly than all the schedules, documents, statistics, wars and Royal doings of formal history. Like two vivid search-lights, they flash into sharp clearness places otherwise dark and obscure.

There is little to choose between them in their frankness of expression, their whipping of vices, their observation of life, their power of tracing the motives and springs of conduct, their skill as portrait painters of English folk over five centuries ago. If one left a typical portrait unfinished, the other supplied the finishing touches. Or if one, for a while, became absorbed in court life, the other observed, with keen and sympathetic eye, those who

Swynken ful hard
And wynnen that wastours
In glotonye destruyeth.

Each is a complement to the other, sometimes showing us the same types from different points of view. But they are to be much more contrasted than compared. As Green remarks: "Nothing brings more vividly home to us the social chasm which in the fourteenth century severed the rich from the poor, than the contrast between the "Complaint of Piers the Ploughman" and the "Canterbury Tales."

In regard to form and method, Langley looked backward, Chaucer forward. Langley continued the old alliterative system and the allegorical tradition, so often running into tedium and platitude. His rude, if strong and sinewy language betrays signs of labour, as of a man toiling in stiff clay. Chaucer used alliteration sparingly; served a willing apprenticeship to the French and Italian masters in literature; exercised his facile pen in varieties of measure, rhythm, rhyme, doing much to give grace, elasticity, and modern feeling to our verse. Even in his moments of closest truth to nature, he rejoices in easy mastery of expression, in triumph of form and technique. Where Langley halts or stumbles, Chaucer airily and unerringly speeds forward. Both unmistakably call a spade a spade. We had not then declined to unreasoning prudery or false modesty.

Langley—moody, rebellious,—wrestles with his thoughts in anguish of spirit, peering through the mists in the hope of light beyond; Chaucer, sane and composed, looks kindly upon his fellows, sets down with a large humanity the truth as it appears to him, and serenely warms both hands at the fire of life. His sympathies are broad and far-reaching; those of his brother-poet are deep but narrow, poignant but restricted. Langley, a popular reformer, a "speaker-out," a man of poverty, by no means void of humour, though it is apt to become savage, shows us many

rough, uncouth scenes. He is so wrought upon by the sufferings of the poor, as to himself betray anguish; a sinister intensity breathes through his lines; a glow of moral earnestness urges him onward; he thinks little of form, of manner; much of the problems of life and whither we are all tending.

By contrast Chaucer is all wit, suavity, urbanity; a courtier of easy, elegant intercourse. The joy of life breathes through his verses. Grace, buoyancy, light-heartedness wait upon them. The laughter of his merry folk echoes still in our ears. "Merrie England" found in him her veracious chronicler. He lived much in the sunshine; poor Will Langley much in the dark shadow.

Langley's series of visions are the history of his soul, while here "on molde." What he set down in his poem was a record of his inner life, not of the petty details which filled up the hours. It is a strange work and its strangeness increases as time separates him more and more from us. Yet in one sense time is powerless to separate such a man from succeeding generations. His earnestness, his love for all who are poor and weary and heavy-laden, his hatred of oppression—these things filtered thro' the minds of many and had their influence upon private, public, even national affairs. If we take a little trouble we find the old poem glows with feeling and represents the life of a true man.

It is also of extreme interest from the literary point of view, for it is one of those rough-hewn monuments of a national language and literature, like the "Poema del Cid," the "Chanson de Roland," or the "Nibelungenlied," heralding developments to come and containing, in their rude form and earnest vigour, anticipations of more perfect art and thought.

To a philologist, Piers Plowman offers an example of

the transition to modern English. To a lover of letters the forms of expression (also in transition), alliteration, rhythm, figures, allegory, are equally attractive. To him whose study is "man," who turns to this poem for what it can tell him of human interest, it is of the highest value. English life and manners of the fourteenth century are seen through the personality of gaunt Will Langley.

The work is peculiarly a national one; English in regard to author, subject, thought and sympathies. It helped to establish as an integral part of our modern literature that high seriousness and moral fervour of which Spenser and Milton became the great interpreters.





WANDERING WILLIE: A CHILD'S SONG.

By TINSLEY PRATT.

O WANDERING Willie, the darkness is falling,
The birds are at rest, and the fields are all still;
And mother, O truant! is calling—is calling,

While father keeps watch from the top of the hill.
Where is it you wander? The house will be dreary
That hears not the sound of your pattering feet;
And mother, O laddie, is ever so weary
With watching for you down the darkening street.

One came from the woodland when daylight was dying,
And whispered a wonderful word in his ear;
Then led him by paths where the oak-leaves were lying,
As ever they lie at the fall of the year.
They strode hand in hand down the hill-side together,
And who so light-hearted and merry as they?
For little cared Willie for wind or for weather,
When magical melodies lured him away.

For long is the road, and the lane has no turning,
That leads on for miles to the Wonderful Land,
And ever the light at the portal is burning
To welcome the pilgrims that march hand in hand.
They dream there the long summer hours through,
reclining

In asphodel meadows that look on the sea,
And all through the day the warm sunlight is shining
Abroad o'er the heathery haunts of the bee.

“O Willie, come back!” But he heard not the calling;
The Wonderful People have lured him away.
He hears but the sound of the cataracts falling,
And singing their songs of the night and the day.
Perhaps in a while the long dream may be broken,
And Willie’s small footsteps shall patter again;
When he comes, in his hand a bright jewel for token
Of magical powers—to heal men of pain.



600 pp. Crown 4to.
15s. Net.

30 pp. Introduction.
Limited Issue.

SHAKESPEARE'S EUROPE.

THE FOURTH PART OF

Fynes Moryson's
Itinerary

Being a Survey of the Condition of Europe at the
beginning of the 17th Century

With an Introduction and an Account of
Fynes Moryson's Career

BY

CHARLES HUGHES, B.A. (Lond. and Vict.).

PUBLISHERS :

SHERATT & HUGHES, 27 ST. ANN STREET, MANCHESTER.

250 pp.
Crown 8vo. Cloth.

Price 5s.
Net.

PASCAL

By ÉMILE BOUTROUX

*Member of the French Institute ; Professor of Modern Philosophy
at the University of Paris.*

TRANSLATED BY
ELLEN MARGARET CREAK

With Portraits, Illustrations, and Notes

PUBLISHED BY
SHERRATT & HUGHES, 27 ST. ANN STREET, MANCHESTER.

Crown 4to.
100 pp.

Price 2s. 6d. Net.
20 full-page Illustrations.

Manchester and the Atlantic Traffic

By T. M. YOUNG

(Author of "*The American Cotton Industry*")

WITH A PLAN AND ILLUSTRATIONS

PUBLISHED BY
SHERRATT & HUGHES, LONDON & MANCHESTER.

160 pp.
Crown 8vo.

Price 4s. 6d.
net.

UNDINE

A LYRICAL DRAMA

By E. HAMILTON MOORE

AUTHOR OF

"RIENZI" & "YGRAINE"

PUBLISHED BY

SHERRATT & HUGHES, 27 ST. ANN STREET, MANCHESTER

